The Making of Modern Ethiopia

A Synopsis

Deribie Mekonnen Demmeksa

The book is a synopsis on the lengthy process of the making of modern Ethiopia. It covers, albeit briefly, the duration from the pre-Aksumite period to the present Ethiopian Federation. It is not a history in the conventional sense. Some could find it controversial. The focus of the book is on the transformation of the Kingdom of Abyssinia to modern Ethiopia. It is primarily an account of how Emperor Menelik II built modern Ethiopia in the second half of the 19th century. It is an illustration of the multinational nature of modern Ethiopia. Anyone interested in Ethiopian controversial history and its present socio-political dynamics would find the book informative, thought-provoking, and a valuable resource to study modern Ethiopia.

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Deribie Mekonnen Demmeksa
Horten, Norway
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Abstract

The Making of Modern Ethiopia: A Synopsis offers a critical interpretive account of the historical and political processes that led to the formation of modern Ethiopia. Rather than presenting a conventional national history, the book examines competing historiographical narratives and situates the emergence of modern Ethiopia within the context of multinational polities, imperial expansion, and settler colonial incorporation in the late nineteenth century. The work distinguishes between two dominant frameworks of interpretation: the Ancient–Aksumite–Abyssinian–Ethiopian narrative and the Modern–Multinational–Colonial–Ethiopian narrative. Through a structured periodization ranging from the proto-Aksumite era to the contemporary Ethiopian Federation, the book interrogates how state power, historiography, religion, and political ideology shaped official histories while marginalizing others. Written as a scholarly synopsis, the book contextualizes ongoing debates on Ethiopian identity, federalism, self-determination, and state formation.

Keywords

Modern Ethiopia; Ethiopian historiography; State formation; Colonial thesis; Multinational federation; Abyssinia; Ethiopian federalism; Political history; Nationalism; Self-determination.

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A Synopsis

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Horten, Norway

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To

All nations, nationalities, and peoples of modern Ethiopia.

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Deribie Mekonnen Demmeksa
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PREFACE

History is made once but interpreted many times and from many perspectives. Those who make it have little opportunity to write it and they have no need to interpret it. Once those who made it are gone, history is exposed to historical interpretations. All history, as we study it today, is a historical interpretation. No two interpretations could be the same, even if done by the same body. This work is one form of historical interpretation of the making of modern Ethiopia.

I am not a historian by formal training. Make no mistake; I am not writing a history of modern Ethiopia in the conventional sense. What I am writing here are my understanding and interpretation. My primary focus is on how modern Ethiopia was built from multinational polities in the second half of the 19th century. Even then, it cannot be the whole story. It is limited in scope and constrained by circumstances. It is a synopsis from an interested reader's note in the emerging tradition on the formation of modern Ethiopia, known as the "colonial thesis." The thesis claims that modern Ethiopia is the result of settler colonial expansion of the Kingdom of Abyssinia where it extended its dominion over the territories that constitute about three-fourth of the modern state by force. Yet, it is not a historical dissertation on the *colonial thesis*. It is an interpretation of it with a summary of the historical progression from the proto Aksumite period of before the common era to the present Ethiopian Federation.

The synopsis could be controversial and provocative. In as much as the official History of modern Ethiopia is controversial and in as much as historians have been divided both on the *unification thesis* and the *colonial thesis* on the formation of modern Ethiopia, this synopsis could be controversial and divided opinions are expected. It could even provoke a counter interpretation, which I will be pleased to welcome.

Deribie Mekonnen Demmeksa
19 April 2019
Horten, Norway

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Divergent Narratives

One could understand the political history of modern Ethiopia by studying its divergent narratives systematically. It is full of controversies, arguments, and counterarguments, to say the least. It is also mired with divergent narratives. There are several competing blocks of narratives. For the convenience of elucidation in this work, I have categorized them into two broad categories: *Ancient-Aksumite-Abyssinian-Ethiopian narrative* (AAAE) and *Modern-Multinational-Colonial-Ethiopian narrative* (MMCE).

The AAAE refers to the narrative that holds Ethiopia is an ancient polity that has sustained its integrity and independence for three millennia, except during very few and very brief state breakdowns due to either internal anarchy or external forces. This narrative has both prehistoric and historic components. For the most part of prehistory, it is based on the legend of Menelik I, the alleged son of King Solomon of Israel and Queen Sheba. Menelik I, the *Kebra Nagast* legend, which was produced about two and half millennia after the effect, has it, established the first Solomonic Dynasty in present northern Ethiopia and Eritrea. For the historic period, it relies heavily on the chronicles, religiously motivated and romanticized legends, and stories of the Abyssinian *Atses*[1] from the 3rd century to the mid-20th century. Also, it relies on Abyssinian history that has been composed in the second half of the 20th century by some Abyssinian historians and Westerners based on the above Abyssinian sources. There is, however, an enormous gap of recorded history and information from the duration between the 6th and 13th century Common Era (CE).

According to this narrative, Abyssinian subjugation of other nations, nationalities, and peoples (NNPs) in the late 19th century was not internal or settler colonialism but annexation and conquest of its ancient territories. In other words, it was "reunification" of former dominion. Accordingly, it holds

the tenuous claim that Ethiopia is an ancient country[2] that has existed for a good 3,000 years. It views the latter narrative as a new secessionist and revisionist approach to the ancient history of Ethiopia.

The MMCE refers to the narrative that holds ancient Ethiopians are the Kushite NNPs; the indigenous peoples of northeast Africa some of whom had become parts of the kingdom of Abyssinia. It asserts that Abyssinian history does not represent the history of the whole NNPs of modern Ethiopia nor do most of the NNPs of Ethiopia have had a common history or collective memory with the Abyssinian (*Habasha)* before the beginning of the last century. The exception is those few NNPs who had already been forcefully or willy-nilly made part of the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia in northern modern Ethiopia. By the end of the 19th century, these few Kushite NNPs had developed *Habasha* identity based on Christianity, the Amharic language, and the legend of *Kebra Nagast*. The narrative also asserts modern Ethiopia was created during the scramble for Africa through Abyssinian settler colonization and annexation of independent nations, states and kingdoms that had existed independently to its south, east and west. It rejects the notion of Abyssinian-centred "ancient Ethiopia" of the AAAE narrative as failed Abyssinian political ideology employed for the legitimization of Abyssinian cultural, political, and economic hegemony on the forcefully incorporated NNPs. Modern Ethiopia, accordingly, is a multi-national empire created only in the second decade of the 19th century by forces of *Atse* Menelik II. Menelik was aided by some European powers and, more importantly, their firearms.

According to this narrative, modern Ethiopia, in general, is an empire created in the late 19th century from the Kingdom of Abyssinia and many colonized and annexed southern, south-western, and south-eastern kingdoms, republican states, emirates, and clan and ethnic-based governments. In this narrative, Abyssinians are mostly Semitic language speaking Tigraway and Amhara, otherwise known as *Habasha*[3]; the Kingdom of Abyssinia is Abyssinia Proper (present northern Ethiopia and southern Eritrea) that once constituted about one-quarter of the territory of modern Ethiopia before the independence of Eritrea in 1993; colonized NNPs are those who had their own socio-political history and governance (both republican and monarchy) before their subjugation by the Kingdom of Abyssinia and the institutionalization of Abyssinian settler colonization among them.

Proponents of MMCE narrative would argue that the claims of the AAAE are mainly based on legends and myth developed at subsequent stages of the kingdom by scribes, monks, and court chroniclers (oftentimes collectively known as *dabtaras*) from highland Abyssinia to validate wishful political and religious claims, and to rationalize consecutive conquests, colonization, and annexations of territories and peoples. According to the proponents of the

MMCE narrative, the *dabtaras'* claimed wherever Christianity[4] had reached through the Abyssinian missionaries who travelled to neighbouring nations and kingdoms as a jurisdiction of the Abyssinian kingdom. They explain, for some AAAE, in addition to claiming wherever their foiled expedition or their trading caravans had reached as the jurisdiction of the kingdom, the simple fact of a non-Abyssinian neighbouring state accepting Christianity or a church being built in non-Abyssinian territory made it jurisdiction of the Abyssinian kingdom. This was as if wherever a Jew was present is Israel or wherever a Mosque was built is an Arab country. They further argue that the Church and the State inseparably (for over one and half millennia) and relentlessly worked together towards this end of claiming every bit of territory and society of people where the Abyssinia missionaries had reached as an Abyssinian territory and Abyssinian subjects. With the ambition of the kingdom and the Church to expand, the proponents of MMCE claim, the *dabtaras* wrote their private religious motivated wishes and the expansionist wishes of their kings. Upon the approval by the kings and the elites of the kingdom, the *dabtaras'* writings became the "history" of the kingdom. Otherwise, through time, the consecutive generations accepted the written stories of their former generation as religious truth and as historical fact. The older the stories got, the more they were accepted as "history" not only by the Abyssinians but also by foreign historians, who ventured to write Abyssinian history. For the proponents of the MMCE *narrative*, the AAAE narrative, as based on such wannabe claims, is not far from history as Napoleon once defined it: "a pack of lies agreed upon."[5]

Most of the "historical" evidence[6] that has been put forward in the AAAE narrative, the proponents of the MMCE narrative would argue, had been developed by *dabtaras* in the tradition of the Abyssinian church that has been characterized with hyperboles and romanticized myth creation throughout the long history of Abyssinia. They hold that the AAAE narrative is a perspective of Ethiopian history derived from the mythical origin and legendary traditions of the kingdom that, by many standards, were not only egocentric and flatteringly self-serving to the successive *Atses,* but also a failed inaccurate and incomplete history.

Proponents of the two narratives are understandably hostile towards each other. Both on the scholarly discourses and the occasional debates, exchanges of harsh criticisms are commonplace. The AAAE narrative appears to have maintained the custodianship of Ethiopian Studies, which is a body of a vicious circle of self-fulfilling and self-satisfying legends and myths coated with a few historical facts and events; whereas, the MMCE narrative appears to have been engaged in an aggressive building of factual records and research, mostly refuting legendary claims and fare-tale stories. Besides, the MMCE appears to have gained strong traction among non-Abyssinian scholars. Oromo Studies,

for example, subscribes to the MMCE narrative. There have been some tacit hostilities between scholars of Ethiopian Studies and Oromo Studies.

The foundations of the religious, political, and cultural elites of the AAAE narrative have, however, been irreversibly dissipated but its enthusiastic subscribers are trying to fight back. They have long lost the support of the non-Abyssinian elites. Non-Abyssinia NNPs have rejected the imposed history of the AAAE narrative and Abyssinian domination. Since the fall of the Abyssinian monarchy in 1974, long suppressed historical facts have begun replacing the mythical origin of the Kingdom of Abyssinia and the legendary tradition of its rulers. The old Christian myths and the legends that had kept the NNPs in captivity have now no place in the historiography of the Ethiopian Federation.

Most of the proponents of the AAAE narrative and their followers have recently been on the defensive. They have remained highly vocal and aggressive against the MMCE narrative and its proponents. They are more concerned about what they cannot do than about what they can do. In a form of fierce reactionary stance against the MMCE narrative, they try desperately to transform myth and legend to history. When challenged on recent historical facts, not only do they lose equanimity and but also become verbally abusive to their opponents. They are also very quick in soliciting support from the Coptic Abyssinian Orthodox Church and resort to faith to find support for some of their absurd claims. The Orthodox Church, now known as Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church, has acted through history as legitimiser of the political claims of the Abyssinian kingdom and sometimes it appears to be a political organization of the proponents of the AAAE than a religious institution. The AAAE elites, sometimes, appear as if they were about to give up on their fundamental claim.

The proponents of the MMCE narrative also appear to be injudicious to some historical aspects. They tend to emphasize only aspects of history that offer more support to the narrative. Deliberate downplaying or omissions of uncomfortable historical events are common. It appears that the recent nationalities politics of the country motivates political elites of even the least historical nationalities to stretch history to portray the nationality as if it had outstanding historical existence as an independent nation. In doing so, they underestimate the historical fact that their nationality had been a subject or a tributary to the Kingdom of Abyssinia at some point in history.

The political elites of the MMCE narrative are divided into two broad categories when it comes to the future solution to redress the oppression of the NNPs of Ethiopia. Moderate of them are proponents of federalism while the immoderate of them are proponents of secession. Thus, they may be categorized as *federalist* and the *secessionist*. The proponents of the former

believe that the federation of the NNPs in Ethiopia is the best political solution to redress the past injustice and for better prospects of all the NNPs. These are by far the majority of the NNPs of the Ethiopian Federation. The latter believe that liberation by separation from the Abyssinian kingdom is the best solution for the realization of full liberty and prosperity of the NNPs. These, however, are not so many. They are representatives of those NNPs who have a clear economic advantage for guaranteed sustainable statehood. The political debate between these two groups of the MMCE appears to have gained more strength since 1991 than between the broad AAAE – MMCE dichotomous categorization.

In this synopsis, I shall employ the MMCE narratives as a framework of the Abyssinia-centred history of modern Ethiopia. However, I shall attempt to maintain a neutral position on the polarity of the *federalist-secessionist* spectrum while being irresolute in presenting the available evidence from readings, both supporting and opposing the two broader narratives and the division within the MMCE narrative.

The Abyssinia-centered Ethiopian History

After the formation of modern Ethiopia (Empire of Abyssinia-cum-Empire state of Ethiopia) in the last decades of the 19th century the Abyssinian history and stories were compiled gradually as official Ethiopian history by court chroniclers and church historians (*Dabtaras*). The Abyssinian traditional historians were busy during the first half of the 20th century in writing the "history" of the new Empire as if it had existed for hundreds of years. The "history" writing project was Abyssinia-centred and preoccupied with the legitimization of the colonization projects of the Abyssinian Kingdom and its complementary counterpart, the Abyssinian Church. It presents the Abyssinian *naftanyaa* system as "civilizing," "unifying," and "nation-building." Abyssinian pseudo-historians take credit for creating "Ethiopian history" out of Abyssinian history. Atsme Giorgis, Aleka Taye Gebremariam, and Tekletsadek Mekuria were among the important Abyssinian traditional historians who succeeded in presenting collections of Amhara ethnocentric chronicles of Abyssinian kings and some legendary accounts of the Abyssinian Church as the history of Ethiopia. They did so with total marginalization of the history of the Islamic Sultanates and the history of the Oromo nation in particular and the history of the other many NNPs of modern Ethiopia in general. The history of the first two alone would have constituted the major part of both ancient and modern Ethiopian history. Some of the other NNPs also have a

history that goes back at least as far as the 13th century when the kingdom of Abyssinia was established.

The uninformed Western historians have written this history of Abyssinia-cum-history of modern Ethiopia to a standard body of historical literature on Ethiopia. They relied heavily on available written local documents and pseudo-historical accounts of successive European missionaries, travellers, and explorers. Among others, Francisco Alvarez (1542, 1550 and 1554 in Italian; 1556 in French; 1557 in Spanish; 1566 in German; 1625 in English), João Bermudez[7] (1565), Balthazar Tellez (1660), Manoel d'Almeyda (1640?), Hiob Ludolf (1681, 1682 (in English), 1684 (in French)), Don Alfonzo Mendez (1625), James Bruce (1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773), Henry Salt (1814), August Dillmann (1848, 1865, 1877, 1907), and H. Zotenberg (1877) have composed aspects of Abyssinian history. They did so based on medieval Abyssinian storytellers and informants of the legendary tradition.

These sources have, however, been discredited. The sources have historically been self-centred and have had little or no sense of distinction between history and story, and history and myth. They were compiled within the literary tradition of Christianity, where the Jesuits were convinced, they had found not only the country of the legendary Prester John but also the Ethiopia of the Holy Bible. Their conviction might have contributed to their blunder not only on history and religion but also Abyssinia and Ethiopia. The conviction and the blunder discredited the Jesuits' and other European writer's, otherwise, good intended works. Even the official chronicles and stories told by European missionaries and travellers in the early 17th century have been doubtable. During the reign of *Atse* Fasiledes (r. 1632-1665) for example, Sir Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge[8] (1857–1934), comments:

> At this time of the day it was almost impossible for anyone to write a *true* account of the reign of Fasiledes, for the simple reason that neither the Abyssinian nor the Portuguese documents relating to it are trustworthy [emphasis in the original] (Budge, 1928, p. 398).

The 20th century European, Arab, and American historians continued to echo Abyssinian history as modern Ethiopian history. Their blander has been in as much as the naivety of summarily lumping African nations into one of a kind that they first met; in as much misinformed by what they had read from their predecessors; and in as much as they copied Abyssinian chronicles. The outcome was a fundamentally flawed projection of the political history of the kingdom of Abyssinia to the whole territory and peoples of modern Ethiopia.

This has imposed a strange history on the non-Abyssinian peoples of modern Ethiopia. The forceful adoption of Abyssinian history has denied the non-Abyssinian NNPs of modern Ethiopia their histories. For non-*Habasha*

people, modern Ethiopia denies their identity, including their history, is a colonial experience. The colonized and annexed NNPs have had their own historical identities. They did not share the historical identity of Abyssinians. Hence, they disown it. They have started to call for their histories to be included in the history of the new federation. Those NNPs who are satisfied with the new voluntary association, the Ethiopian Federation, have started to develop their language, culture, history, and traditions. Those NNPs who are not satisfied with the formation of the new Ethiopian Federation are still calling for independence.

The imposition of Abyssinian history and the quest for self-determination of the non-Abyssinian NNPs of modern Ethiopia could be understood by a closer examination of how modern Ethiopia was built at the end of the 19th century. Doing so would require having enough understanding of the progressive historical epochs (historical periods), both prior to and after the 19th century. Our focus shall, however, be on the epochs after the formation of the Empire of Abyssinia-cum-modern Ethiopia during the second half of the 19th century.

Progressive Epochs

In this work, I have made use of a slightly different periodization for convenience than what has been common in the mainstream "history of Ethiopia." The main reason for adopting this periodization is to highlight the discordance of Abyssinia-centred Ethiopian history to the would-be history of the multinational Ethiopian Federation. The Abyssinia-centred Ethiopian history has been presented both by Abyssinian (sometimes by non-Abyssinian native historians as well) and Western historians as one generic and all-encompassing history of Ethiopia. This is against the evident reality that it has been, in the true sense of its content, a projection of Abyssinian history to all the NNPs of the present Ethiopian federation. This tendency of making Ethiopian history an Abyssinia-centred history has continued to date. It seems old school historians have not yet fully understood how and how much the Abyssinian history falls short of representing the history of the NNPs of Ethiopia.

Modern Ethiopia is not the same as the kingdom of Abyssinia nor can the history of the kingdom of Abyssinia be the history of modern Ethiopia. My attempt in this regard is neither to correct historians who subscribe to the AAAE narrative nor to revise the history but only to reflect on the fact that Abyssinia is only the core kingdom around which the Empire of Ethiopia was built and the former Kingdom of Abyssinia was, in a good historical sense, but

only a small part, not the whole, of present-day Ethiopia. The primary purpose of this work remains to inform the reader on the context of political history that led to the formation of modern Ethiopia, hence the Ethiopian Federation. In other words, the main purpose of this work is to explain, albeit briefly, the making of modern Ethiopia, having a long regressive look through the long course of history and staying within the MMCE narrative.

For this purpose, I have classified the periodization of this synopsis into eight illustrative periods of political history. These are:

(1) ***Punt and D'MT*** where I shall discuss briefly the historical and legendary origin of the proto-Aksumite kingdom,

(2) The ***Kingdom of Aksum*** where I shall highlight the legendary, traditional, and historical aspects of the kingdom,

(3) ***The Dark Age*** where I shall highlight the historical disconnect between the ancient Aksumite kingdom and the Abyssinian Kingdom,

(4) The ***Kingdom of Abyssinia*** where I shall at reasonable length discuss the formation of the kingdom in connection to the legends, myth, traditions, and historical records that inform us about the expansion, victories, defeats, unification, and its interactions with other neighbourly nations and kingdoms,

(5) ***Empire of Abyssinia*** where I shall recount on how, under *Atse* Menelik II, Ethiopia got its present diversity of NNPs, geographical jurisdictions, and centralization of administration to inform our understanding of the present dynamics of the ethno-national (national) politics and the multi-nationality of the federation,

(6) ***Empire of Ethiopia*** where I shall try to elaborate on the process of transforming the Empire of Abyssinia into a modern nation-state through the instrumentation of the imperial constitutions of the "Empire of Ethiopia" under *Atse* Haile Selassie I,

(7) ***The People's Republic of Ethiopia*** where I shall provide a very brief highlight into the suppression of democratic and fundamental rights and freedoms of the NNPs of Ethiopia for the futile effort of continuing the illusory project of nation-state building and the wild dream of socialist Eutopia under the provisional military administration and its socialist political ideology, and

(8) ***The Ethiopian Federation*** where I shall introduce the transitional process that resulted in the formation of the present Ethiopian Federation.

Summary

In this Chapter, I have introduced the two divergent narratives of Ethiopian political history. For elucidation, I have categorized them into Ancient-

Aksumite-Abyssinia-Ethiopian (AAAE) and Modern-Multinational-Colonial-Ethiopian (MMCE). I have also made clear that modern Ethiopian history is based on Abyssinian history and its historiography excludes the majority non-Abyssinian nations and nationalities of modern Ethiopia. Both Abyssinian church and court elites and some historians and few Western writers had roles in transforming and transposing the Abyssinian pseudo-history to the history of modern Ethiopia. The pseudo-history-cum-Ethiopian history has denied most of the Ethiopian nations and nationalities their history and their national identities. In an attempt to illustrate the gradual development of the Abyssinian and Ethiopian history, I have periodized it into (1) Punt and D'MT (2) Kingdom of Aksum (3) "Dark Age" (4) Kingdom of Abyssinia (5) Empire of Abyssinia (6) Empire of Ethiopia (7) People's Republic of Ethiopia, and (8) Ethiopian Federation. This would allow us to recapitulate progressive historical developments in what has now become the failed history of Ethiopia. The emphasis is, however, on the fourth and fifth epochs (periods), which I shall discuss at length.

Notes to Chapter 1

1 *Atse* is an Abyssinian royal title, the equivalent of "king of kings" in Abyssinian history, alias known Emperor elsewhere. Because they appoint local governors as kings, Abyssinian kings used to crown themselves as 'king of kings.' The title had little or no difference from a king but appears to have had less power and magnanimity than the conventional title of emperor. As the kingdom started to expand and achieved the structure and size of a small empire, starting from the late 19th century, *Atse* started to become an equivalent of an emperor. It appears to have reached the magnanimity of the European Emperor during the reign of *Atse* Menelik II and *Atse* Haile Selassie I. It was during the reign of the latter that the title was translated as emperor in the 1931 Imperial Constitution of the Empire of Ethiopia. *Atse* was not used as a synonym to the emperor before *Atse* Menelik II built the Abyssinian Empire nor the kingdom was known as an empire before that. To maintain consistency and better appeal to the context, the nomenclature *Atse* is used throughout this work.

2 "Country" emphasizes the physical dimension of a geographical area. It does not necessarily mean the country is a self-governing legal and political entity as a "state" is. (See the definition of a nation at http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/nation.html)

3 Habasha is the common identity of mainly the Tigre and Amhara peoples. But it includes other peoples who were fully integrated into the Habasha identity, which is based on Orthodox Christianity, Amharic language, Abyssinian monarchy, and Christian tradition. It was given to them by Mohammedans (Russell, 1985, p. 94). It synonymously denotes the Semitic language-speaking people of the ancient Abyssinian Kingdom including Eritrea. The *AAAE* tried unsuccessfully to project Habasha identity to all people of Ethiopia. The effect of such an attempt is still felt as fresh among the uninformed Habasha. They hardly recognize that being Habasha is not synonymous with being Ethiopian. The former is just a small part of the latter. All other Ethiopian peoples, i.e. Oromo, Sidama, Somali, Guragie, Hadiyya, Wolaita, Afar, Gamo, Anyuak, Gumuz, Kunama, Gedeo, etc. are not *Habasha*; but Ethiopian.

4 According to Keane (1920, pp. 487-88), Abyssinian Christianity was "somewhat suddenly imposed an undeveloped form of Christianity by the preaching of Frumentius in the fourth century, with results that cannot be called satisfactory," and its social institutions are "marked by elementary notions of justice and paradoxical "shamanistic" practices, interspersed with a few sublime moral precepts."

5 Quoted by Oliver Stone in his documentary series, *The Untold History of United States*, 2012. Disc 1, Episode 1, at 00:01:10.

6 Some foreigners who lived in Abyssinia and have evaluated them ridiculed these sources. The British diplomat and close friend of *Atse* Tewodros II, Walter C. Plowden (1820-1860), for instance, described these same sources as "containing in a mass of rubbish a few sentences worthy of notice" (Plowden, 2011, p. 91).

7 There is another Bermudez in Abyssinian history, not a priest, but a soldier. Bermudez was one of the Portuguese soldiers who were placed for the defense of the southern border of the Abyssinian kingdom immediately after the Christian and Muslim wars. The Oromo army fought with the Portuguese army and removed it from the frontier (Baissa, 2004, p. 103). He was given the Oromo land in Fatagar, Dewaro, and Bali as prize property by *Atse* Gelawdewos and had settled in Dawaro together with 115 other Portuguese soldiers until they were chased away by the Oromo during *Gadaa Muudanna* (Gidada, 2016, p. 61).

8 He was an Egyptologist, Orientalist, and philologist who wrote an extensive history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia based on available chronicles and was awarded a third-class Order of Star of Ethiopia by *Atse* Menelik II.

CHAPTER 2

PUNT (CA. 2800-500BCE) AND D'MT (CA. 500 BCE-100 CE)

Humanity has been in and out of East Africa for many millennia. It is a well-known palaeoanthropological element that Africa is the origin of humankind. It is the place where the first people populated the globe about 50,000 years ago. However, studies show that in the recent historical times, humanity also returned to Africa. A recent study of the human genome from Africa suggests that not only the East African population has as much as twenty-five percent Eurasian ancestries, but also at least five percent of all Africans have their genomes traceable to Eurasian migration into Africa (Gibbons, 2015). The study also suggests a massive population migration from the Middle East to Africa might have taken place about 3,000 years ago. This finding substantiates the migration of Middle Eastern peoples into Africa, which may include that of the southern Arabian migrants to the northeast and East Africa in the first millennia BC or later.

The known prehistoric polities that were established in this region, south of Egypt, were Kush, Punt, and D'MT. Before the migration of the Middle Eastern people into the Horn of Africa, indigenous people who are referred to as Kush in antiquity and as ancient Ethiopia at the later stage had populated the region. Ancient Egyptians referred to a part of these Kushite people and the area that had been inhabited by them as Punt. The exact location of the center of Punt is still disputed by historians but there is a consensus that it was in the Horn of Africa region, not very far from the coastline of the Red Sea or

the Indian Ocean. Punt was accessible by land along the Nile. Punt, thus, could be understood as an ancient kingdom somewhere in the present Horn of Africa. It was in a trading partnership of ancient Egypt for over two millennia from about 2800-500BCE. D'MT (Daamat) and Aksumite kingdoms may have been the successor of Punt in the region.

D'MT (700-500BCE) was a Sabaean-influenced kingdom centered in present-day Eritrea and some part of Tigray State in northern Ethiopia. Its capital is believed to be at Yeha, in Tigray State. The kingdom might have emerged from trade relations with Saba from across the Red Sea (Pankhurst, 2001). It had "at its highest levels a veneer of cultural affinities adopted largely from the Sabaean culture centred across the Red Sea in the area of modern Yemen" (Phillipson, 1997, pp. 441-442). These cultural affinities included the introduction of written language, buildings of monuments using ashlar masonry (like the Yeha Temple), and scaled-up sculptures (Phillipson, 1997). Phillipson (1997) argues the cultural affinities in the kingdom could not have been possible without "some form of underlying political unification" between D'MT and Saba (p. 442). Historical evidence suggests the kingdom of D'MT declined gradually and was replaced ultimately by the kingdom of Aksum.

Proponents of the AAAE narrative try frantically to link the historic kingdom of D'MT with the legend of Menelik I. Historians refer to D'MT as a proto-Aksumite kingdom. Abyssinian tradition and religious legend, however, have a different story. They claim that there existed a kingdom established by Menelik I (initially *'Ebna Hakim*) during the historical existence of the kingdom of D'MT in the territory that encompasses most of present-day Eritrea and northern Tigray State of the Ethiopian Federation. According to this claim, Menelik I's legendary kingdom originated from a kingdom that existed around the 9th century BCE. This kingdom is believed to be the kingdom of the so-called Queen of Saba (Makeda /Hindeke /Candace). Ten centuries later, the New Testament refers to it as the kingdom of "Candace queen of the Ethiopians [Kushites]" (Acts, 8: 27(KJV)). The legendary kingdom of Menelik I existed starting from before 1000 BCE and is a widely accepted legend among the followers of Coptic Orthodox Church in Abyssinia (early 4th – mid-20th century), now known as Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church since 1960s. This is mainly because this legendary proto-Aksumite kingdom is associated with the legendary queen of Sheba who is known as Makeda in Abyssinian religious legend and tradition of *Kebra Nagast,* which has become part of the faith of the Abyssinian Church. This claim is the foundation of the AAAE narrative.

A proto-Aksumite kingdom, which had a connection to the kingdom of Saba of southern Yemen, existed in the region that would become the kingdom of Aksum. Its center is believed to be at *Yeha*. Yeha is about 30 kilometres

northeast of Adwa, in present Tigray State. The historical evidence of its existence comes from the Sabaean inscriptions found in the region. It is identified commonly as D'MT (*Daamat*) Kingdom. Though the inscriptions were initially believed to have been written starting from the 7th century BCE, Selassie (1972) points out that "according to palaeographical evidence the earliest date of these inscriptions, especially that of Yeha, is from the fifth century BCE" (p. 60). It was the Sabaean kingdom and the evidence comes from Sabaean inscriptions. Also, it had its *Mukarrib* (Selassie, 1972, p. 59). *Mukarrib* was the south Arabian political, religious, and judicial title equivalent to the Abyssinian title of king or "king of kings." As a result, whether *Daamat* was the kingdom of Makeda that, according to the legend of the Abyssinian monarchs, Menelik I had inherited is in doubt.

However, some historians argue that there existed an indigenous kingdom before the Aksumite kingdom in the territory of the present Eritrea and northern Ethiopia. This pre-*Daamat* indigenous government, according to the study by historian Lapiso G. Delebo, was the government of Punt (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C.[1], pp. 9-10). This Puntine, non-Sabaean pre-Aksumite civilization that had occupied the region before the arrival of the Sabaean, is far from the archaeological assertion. This is owing to the initial stages of archaeological research in the region. Nevertheless, it is a historical fact, as mentioned earlier, that the Egyptians used to trade with Punt.

The historical connection or succession between Punt, Daamat, and Aksum is yet to be established. The fact that the non-Aksumite indigenous peoples of the Horn of Africa region, for example, the Oromo and the Somali, have continued to claim that Punt referred to them, makes it difficult for the historically late comer South Arabian immigrants, who established the Aksumite kingdom in place of, or parallel to, or even as a competitive state to the indigenous states to claim that Aksum was a successor of Punt or D'MT.

Nevertheless, the legend of the Queen of Sheba and her union with King Solomon of Israel has continued to serve in the AAAE narrative as the legendary origin of both the proto-Aksumite monarchy and the so-called Solomonic Dynasty. The latter emerged in the 13th century as the Kingdom of Abyssinia. The legend began based on the excessively twisted use of two connoting accounts in the Old Testament (1 Kings 10:1-13 and 2 Chronicles 9: 1-12) on the visit of the queen of Sheba to Jerusalem to meet King Solomon.

Beyond the account in the Bible, an Abyssinian book, known as *Kebra Nagast* (The Glory of Kings), elaborates on the legend. The book was likely compiled around 1300 CE or sometime during the 14th century CE (Braukæmper, 2012; Cohen, 2009; Berhe 2009; Delebo, 1999 Eth. C.; Adejumobi, 2007). It asserts the conception of a baby boy named Menelik I from a carnal relationship between queen Makeda (Saba) and King Solomon,

during her visit to Jerusalem. With the conceived baby, the queen returned to her country and gave birth to a baby boy. She named him Menelik I. When Menelik I was at the age of twenty, he went to Jerusalem to meet and consult with his father. There he received education on Judaism and the system of government before he was blessed and anointed by his father, King Solomon, to be sent out to be a king in the country of Makeda, overtaking his mother. Accordingly, Menelik I established the "Solomonic" Dynasty that replaced the kingdom of Makeda. To disseminate the new religion (Judaism), the book claims, Menelik I come back with few thousands of able Jewish priests and teachers who later formed the Felasha (ፈላሻ) community (Beta- Israel[2]). The book also claims that Menelik I have brought the true Ark of the Covenant with him to Aksum, where it is believed to rest to date. Furthermore, the book argues that not the Jews but the Abyssinian people are the "chosen people" and only the Abyssinian monarch has the legitimate right to rule Abyssinia and the rest of the world because the Abyssinian monarchs are the only monarchs who trace their lineage directly to the House of David through King Solomon (Mole, 2014, p. 17; Haberland, 1992, pp. 705-706).

Kebra Nagast is a mythical story than history. It is an impressive legend of the Kingdom of Abyssinia. "Folk legends, biblical, Talmudic [*sic*] and Kur'anic traditions were brought together here [in *Kebra Nagast*] and harmonized with a divine mission of salvation" (Haberland, 1992, p. 705). It had little acceptance as a repository of ancient history that is claimed. It was ridiculed as an oblivious and self-satisfying pronouncement of pride. Commenting on the legend in 1833, Michael Russell (1985) states:

> [T]he slightest attention to it [*Kebra Nagast*] will convince the reader that it is the production of an ignorant monk, who used the Septuagint translation of the Bible as the groundwork of ridiculous fable, with the sole view of ministering to the vanity of his fellow citizens. (p. 109)

The book received some acceptance after it was published in Europe but remains a religiously-motivated legend. James Bruce, the Scottish explorer, brought *Kebra Nagast* to Europe in the last quarter of the 18th century. It was published first in the second decade of the 19th century. Its acceptance has been noted among Orientalists who place Ethiopia in the Orientalist studies and among the leaders of the *Rasta* Movement who understand the book as a holy book. Outside of these circles, the book is believed to be an Egyptian Coptic Church's conspiracy to maintain the kingdom under itself and within the control of the Egyptian State (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C). As such, it is religious propaganda intended to link the New Testament's "Candace queen of the Ethiopians" (Acts, 8: 27 8 KJV)) with the Old Testament Queen of Sheba and King Solomon (1King 10: 1-13, KJV), and both with biblical Ethiopia (Kush)

in the north of modern Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, the Orthodox Tewahdo Church has huge regard for the book not only as an owner but also as a beneficiary. Its key purpose is connecting the kingdom of Makeda and Menelik I for the religious claim that Abyssinia is the second Zion.

Historically, the kingdom of Makeda remains obscure. There has been a little and highly inconsistent record about the kingdom. The fragmented archaeological evidence is far from justifying the historical existence of the kingdom and its connection to the ancient Kingdom of Israel. The archaeological evidence is estimated to have come from the period after the sixth or fifth century BCE because the proto-Aksumite kingdom is believed to have achieved statehood, named D`MT (Daamat), during this time (Phillipson, 1998, cited in Asrat, 2009, p. 1); not any time before. The scanty archaeological undertakings from the surrounding region of Yeha have unearthed evidence of "religious or funerary installations" that are very much similar to those in South Arabia (Munro-Hay, 1991, cited in Asrat, 2009, p. 1). These, however, do not confirm the existence of the so-called Sabaean Kingdom of Makeda or "Solomonic" Kingdom of Menelik I in Yeha nor do they prove that such civilization or kingdom had existed in the 9th century BCE or the immediate consecutive centuries. Indeed, historians have no incertitude that the legend of Menelik I, son of King Solomon of Israel, was a religiously-motivated fable with no historical backing of any sort.

Though the story of the "queen of the south" as reported in the Bible and the Qur'an are not disputed, whether the kingdom of Sheba was in Africa or South Arabia has remained a matter of faith-based debate and religious conviction rather than an attested historical fact belonging to either. The little available associative archaeological evidence on its identification also has remained inconclusive. Both Yemen and Ethiopia have continued to claim that the Queen of Sheba was her queen. Historical evidence points to south Yemen as the center of the historical kingdom of Sheba.

In Ethiopia, because the legend has become part of the faith of the Abyssinian Orthodox Tewahdo Church and hence the belief of its followers, it is not considered as historically doubtable by the faithful. In the vanity to associate Jesus Christ with Abyssinia, the monks of the Abyssinian church went up to create a new legend where they claim abysmally that one of the three wise men (Magi) who witnessed the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem (Matthew 2: 1-12) was the then Aksumite king Bazen. Some of the Abyssinian monks claim absurdly that Virgin Marry had traveled to Aksum. This was when she stayed in Egypt fleeing from the wrath of prosecution of children by King Herod in an attempt to kill the infant Jesus (Matthew 2:13-15). All of the followers of the church, though only a few tend to believe the associative legend due to

vanity of hear-say faith, have been influenced by all the traditions and culture of the church that have been built wholly upon such legend.

Moreover, the so-called "three thousand years history" of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) solely depended on the legend of Menelik I. The Abyssinians were able to project successfully the controversial historical claim of their kingdom, which makes up only a quarter of the country to the whole of present Ethiopia, which was formed at the end of the 19th century. The "three thousand years history" assumes the existence of the "Solomonic Kingdom" in Abyssinia uninterrupted for one thousand years before the emergence of the Aksumite kingdom. However, there is hardly any archaeological or historical evidence that can prove such a claim. What is known however is the fact that the legend of the "Solomonic Kingdom" itself was an invention of the 13th or 14th century CE, more than two millennia later. Also, the "three thousand years history" takes into account the "Dark Age" of about four hundred years, between the fall of the Aksumite kingdom and the emergence of the Zagwean dynasty, as part of the continued existence of the state. This period is where no recorded history of the kingdom can be found. Instead, yet another Abyssinian legend has it, the kingdom was ruled by the so-called pagan Queen, Gudit, who is said to have ruled from Aksum. It also includes the Zagwean Period for about 350 years as a continuation of the legendary kingdom of Menelik I. The AAAE narrative considers these legendary periods as part of the history of the Abyssinian Kingdom-cum-modern Ethiopia. Owing to the absence of historical evidence and the long lapse of many centuries between them, whether the Zagwean Dynasty was the continuation of the Aksumite kingdom or not can't be proven. The rule of the dynasty of Queen Gudit that lasted from 7th to 10th century CE, by the admission of the proponents of the AAAE narrative, was not Christian and the oppressed Christian Aksumite had fled south. They also accuse the Zagweans of usurping the "Solomonic" throne. Thus, both the reign of Gudit and the Zagwean Dynasty was not a direct continuation of the so-called Solomonic Dynasty. The "three thousand years history" does not acknowledge these many centuries of interruption after the fall of the Aksumite kingdom. Leaving the "Dark Age" out, and considering the Zagwean Dynasty as their own, some Abyssinians take for granted that their kingdom was not only the continuation of Aksumite Kingdom but also an uninterrupted continuation from the obscure kingdom of Makeda, from a thousand years earlier. Their "evidence" is the legend written as recently as the 14thcentury in the book known as, *Kebra Nagast*.

The Abyssinian kingdom and its church, the Abyssinian Orthodox Tewahdo Church, venerated the book of the story of their legend, *Kebra Nagast*, to add spiritual legitimacy to the legend. The kingdom, based on the Egyptian Coptic Church's political mission in Abyssinia, also made the story of the *Kebra*

Nagast and its ecclesiastical provisions the law of the land. As such, it served the kingdom from the 14th to the 20th centuries. Besides, the adapted translation of the *Fetha Nagast* cemented the claims of the *Kebra Nagast*. *Fetha Nagast* is a compilation of laws for spiritual and temporal matters produced based on Christian Scriptures, Christian traditions and cannons, Didascalia of Coptic Church in Egypt, and judgments of the kings (Budge, 1928, p. 568) by a Coptic Egyptian scholar and jurist Abul Fada'il ibn al-'Assal[3] (Strauss, 1968, p. xv). *Fetha Nagast* (also referred to as Egyptian Coptic Church's 13th-century Collection of Church and Civil Laws), as an extension and enforcement of the *Kebra Nagast*, would become the spiritual and temporal law of the Abyssinian Kingdom until the early 20th century.

It is therefore difficult to undermine the importance of the legend for the Abyssinian kingdom and the Abyssinian peoples even if the legend has no truth in it. The legend had served as the foundation of the church and the Abyssinian Kingdom and its peoples in as much as the story of Exodus is the foundation of Abrahamic religions. Similarly, it is the foundation of the AAAE narrative in the political history of Ethiopia. Had the legend be true, one would logically expect the historical Judaic Kingdom in the country of Makeda and the kingdom of Aksum. It would not be difficult to find historical evidence. There has not been any evidence indicating the presence of a Judaic kingdom nor do historians know that Aksum itself was a Jewish kingdom before it became Christian. What is known is that the Aksumite Kingdom was rather a pagan kingdom whose kings boasted about their affiliations to the Greek gods and goddesses in their war victory inscriptions that they left behind as recently as three hundred years CE. As a result, nothing has been conclusive for the historical existence of the so-called Makeda or "Solomonic" Kingdom in north-east Africa but, to the contrary, a thriving indigenous Cushitic civilization and Cushitic empire commonly referred to as ancient Ethiopia.

Nevertheless, the widely accepted but forlornly flawed legend of *Kebra Nagast* has recently gained some popularity among some political and ideological circles. This is more than seven centuries later than its creation and more than two millennia later than the incidence it was created around. Following the domination of Tigrie elites (from the historical region where the legendary Queen of Sheba was said to have lived) in the politics, the economy, and the security of the Ethiopian Federation, the legend has started to be the source of inspiration for the same motive that it was created. It is being used as a means for domination of the Tigraway political and religious elites. Besides, the *Rasta* movement has adopted the book of the legend, *Kebra Nagast*, literally as its "Bible". Many more myths have also been developed around the cult of *Ras*[4] Tafari (affectionately called *Rasta* or *Ja*[5] by Rastafarians) out of the original myth. Like many other legends, there is no doubt that it will continue

to be used instrumentally both inside and outside of Ethiopia. To a reasonable person, however, the legend is true in as much as the Abyssinians (more specifically the Tigraway) are the "chosen people" and the city of Aksum in northern Ethiopia is the new Zion than the Israelites and their ancient city of Jerusalem, and *Ras* Teferi (*Atse* Haile Selassie I) is the reincarnation of Jesus Christ.

In summary, pre-Aksumite history in northern Ethiopia is less certain and mythical. With all the likelihood, Punt was a Cushitic polity that existed in North-east Africa for over two millennia (ca. 2800-500BC). Yet, no one knows much about it. It is highly likely that D'MT (ca. 500 BCE-100 CE) was a Sabaean outpost on the west shores of the Red Sea. It is highly likely that it was proto-Aksumite. The legendary "Solomonic kingdom" in Africa is truly mythical. Punt and D'MT may be considered as a very distant lighthouse with only faint light the magnitude of which is yet to be discovered upon arrival, whereas the kingdom of Makeda and Menelik I are only imaginations of the sailors never to be found in reality. A well-established history in present north Ethiopia begins with the Kingdom of Aksum.

Notes to Chapter 2

1 "Eth. C." stands for "Ethiopian calendar," otherwise referred to as "Geez calendar." It is seven years and eight months behind the Gregorian calendar. To avoid errors that may result from simply adding seven or eight years to the Ethiopian calendar to convert it to the Gregorian calendar when the month is not mentioned in the Ethiopian sources, it is presented as-is. The months in the Ethiopian calendar, which are 13 with 12 of them with 30 days each and the 13th month having 5 days (6 days during leap years) are 8-11 days behind that of Gregorian months.

2 Felasha, in the local language, means an immigrant. It is used to refer to the Beta-Israel people as immigrants. The people themselves prefer to call themselves Beta-Israel or Ethiopian Jews. They have been the only people described as immigrants in the history of Ethiopia. They lived in Ethiopia for over two millennia. At times, they had had their kings and kingdoms in the Simen Mountains region of northwestern Ethiopia. Often the Christian kingdom persecuted them, and their population dwindled over centuries. They were able to resist the persecution of many historical battles. Nevertheless, the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia crushed them in the mountain hideout during the 14th-17th centuries. After the establishment of the State of Israel, particularly starting from the 1980s, most of the survivors were taken back to Israel in series of so-called "Operations" by the Government of Israel in collaboration with the USA. Operation Moses, a collaboration between CIA and Israel Defense Force during November 21, 1984 – January 5, 1985, airlifted some 8,000 Ethiopian Jews, after secretly moving them out and organizing them into bordering Sudan, directly to Israel. It was followed by Operation Joshua, which was led by the USA where more than 1,000 so-called "orphans of circumstance" were taken to Israel. In 1991, in just less than 36 hours, Operation Solomon took off 14,000 Jews to Israel from Addis Ababa using the opportunity of a change of government and hours of the absence of government (political power vacuum) in the country through highly coordinated and planned security work. Presently, over 130,000 Ethiopian Jews reside in Israel (MJAA, 2015).

3 In some sources, the collector is referred to as Magmou Al-Safawy Ibn Al-Assal. Awlaad Al-Assal refers to four generations of Egyptian wealthy Coptic families who lived in the 13th century. The collection, in its first 1245 CE Arabic translation originally in Arabic in Cairo, was first entitled "A Collection of Church and Civil Laws" and it was prepared based on "the norms and traditions of the Coptic Orthodox Church." A preliminary translation by William A. Hanna in 1996 from Arabic text published by Hegomen Philothaos Awad, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, in 1886 CE is available at http://pharos.bu.edu

4 The highest commanding officer in the military hierarchy who also governors of one of the distinguished provinces and act as member of the team of councilors to the *Atse* (king of the kings) in the traditional Abyssinian political structure.

The most favorite of the *Ras* is known as Ras Bitwedad. He is equivalent to Prime Minister in a presidential system.

5 In the 16th century, during the reign of Ya'eqob (Jacob) the sovereign of Abyssinian started to be addressed as Janhoy. Immediately before the reign of Ya'eqob they were addressed as Donzo. In ancient times, probably during the late Aksumite times or during the Zagwean Dynasty, they were addressed as Jan Qes (see Tafla, 1987, p. 189).

CHAPTER 3

KINGDOM OF AKSUM (CA.100-650 CE)

Unlike the elusive and obscure Punt and D'MT, the history of Aksum is clear and supported by both archaeological and historical evidence. Its territory included the present Tigray State in the Ethiopian Federation, southern Eritrea, and at some point north-central Sudan, formerly known as Meroe, and southern Yemen. The Aksumite kingdom emerged at the end of the 1st century CE. Indisputable historical and archaeological evidence attests to this. The first mention of the existence of the Aksumite commercial capital about 500 kilometers inland from the port of Adulis, where its "Greek educated King" *Zoscales* ruled, was first mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* written in the first century CE (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 22). Adulis served as a center of commerce connecting Asia, Europe, and Arabia through its ports at Adulis and Dahlak. Sometime between 100 and 1000 CE, Aksum had maritime trade relations with Egypt, Nubia, Persia, Arabia, Greek, and India (Jalata, 2005; Budge, 1928). Some traditions indicate Aksum was already a thriving kingdom at the turn of the second century (Munro-Hay, 1991). The documented and recorded history of the kingdom of Aksum, however, starts in the 3rd century CE (Berhe, 2009).

Despite this, whether the Aksumite kingdom was a continuation of the Makedan kingdom, or a newly emerged kingdom is not yet fully known. The attempt by the proponents of the AAAE narrative to connect the kingdom of Mekeda to the 13th century Abyssinian kingdom, based on the creation of the legend of the so-called Solomonic Dynasty by the Abyssinian church, which

has been written into the pseudo-history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia, has recently been established as a mere total fabrication. One of the most prominent Ethiopian historians, Delebo (1999 Eth. C.) argues: first, there was no connection between the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Queen Makeda; second, there existed no King Menelik I, the alleged son of King Solomon of Israel, the alleged founder of the Solomonic Dynasty on the continent of Africa; third, there was no Judaism in the kingdom before Christianity was adopted in the 4th century. The religious record states that a queen referred to as "queen of Sheba" or "Queen of the South" visited the king of Israel, King Solomon, but no more. The story in *Kebra Nagast* is a wishful exposition of such a brief statement by some monks.

There are two conflicting historical explanations about the origin of the Aksumite kingdom. One claims it was formed through natural absorption and assimilation of migrants in different climatic zones. The other claims an establishment of an Arabian colony on the west coast of the southern Red Sea. There is evidence that Sabean (Arabs) from southwest of Arabia migrated across the Red Sea during the first millennium CE and settled among the indigenous *Agew* and Beja people in the northern plateau of the western coast of the southern Red Sea. This new settlement of the Arabs led to the disconnection between the northern Beja who inhabits the coastal Red Sea and other Cushitic peoples in the south: "Through the Afars (Danákil) of the arid coastlands between Abyssinia and the sea, the Bejas are [were] connected with the numerous Hamitic populations of the Somali and Galla [Oromo] lands" (Keane, 1920, p. 485). This suggests that the Hamitic (Cushites) were contiguous nations before the arrival of the Arabian migrants in the region. The migrants soon created small political chiefdoms mirroring the political system of the Sabaeans in the country of their origin. By the beginning of the Christian era in Aksum, around the mid-fourth century CE, these chiefdoms had established the kingdom of Aksum through their integration with the indigenous people, with its capital at Aksum. According to Duiker & Spielvogel (2001) and Johnson (1985, p. 160), however, Aksum was founded as a colony of the kingdom of Saba of southern Arabia. When Saba declined, Aksum broke away as an independent state (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2001). The latter explanation is as plausible as the former.

Both explanations agree with the general perception of human integration when they move from one climatic zone to another as a minority. Agustus Henry Keane (1833-1912), one of the pioneers in ethnographic writing whose works have been rewritten by A Hingston Quiggin and Alfred C. Haddon, provides us with the context of mixing of the Arabs with the indigenous peoples and their subsequent absorption, including an example of the Semites in Abyssinia. Keane (1920) states:

> Wherever different climatic zones have been invaded, the intruders have failed to secure a permanent footing, either perishing outright or disappearing by absorption or more or less complete assimilation to the aboriginal elements. Such are some "black Arabs" in Egyptian Sudan, other Semites and Hamites in Abyssinia and West Sudan (Himyarites, Fulahs, and others), Finns and Turks in Hungary and the Balkan Peninsula (Magyars, Bulgars, Osmanli), Portuguese and Netherlanders in Malaysia, English in tropical or sub-tropical lands, such as India, where Eurasian half-breeds alone are capable of founding family groups. (p. 17)

The absorption or assimilation of the Arabs to the indigenous Cushitic peoples and their imparting of some of their cultures- evidently political culture- may have resulted in the formation of the multi-national, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural small kingdom of Aksum around the turn of the new Common Era. Some cultural anthropologists and historians, substantiating their positions with historical evidence, agree that the immigrants from southern Arabia established the kingdom of Aksum in the last century BCE.

However, historians are divided on the origin of the people who established the kingdom of Aksum. There are several accounts. The first account, which is endorsed by the AAAE narrative, is based on the illustrious legend, the legendary union of the local Sabean (Makedan) and Israeli kingdoms. There is no archaeological and historical evidence to substantiate the legend of the formation of the kingdom as the "Solomonic" Kingdom in Aksum. The only "sources" are those mythological union of Queen of Saba and King Solomon took place and the alleged formation of the Solomonic Kingdom by their son, Menelik I, as narrated in *Kebra Nagast*. It is likely, the legend started to be promoted orally during the Zagwean rule (ca. 916–1270 CE) for political purposes. The royals of the Zagwe Dynasty claimed descent from Moses and his "Ethiopian wife"[1] mentioned in Numbers 12: 1 in the Bible to evoke their version of divine anointment for the throne. This was in response to the accusation[2] of usurping the throne of the son of King Solomon by those who had started to popularize the legend[3] of the union of Solomon and Sheba.

The second account, which is widely accepted, is that Arab *Habasha*t and Ag'azi tribes[4] from Yemen across the Red Sea and established the kingdom of Aksum, to which the former has given its name, Abyssinia (Budge, 1928, p. 577; Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 7)[5] and the latter its ancient language, Geez[6] (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 7). According to this account, it appears, the kingdom of Aksum was formed as a colonial post. It was established around the first millennium BCE.

The third account is specifically about the migration of Sabaeans. A vivid assertion on the migration of southern Arabian peoples to Aksum, across the Red Sea, comes from the works of Drusilla Dunjee Houston who states that "when the second Adite Empire was overthrown, masses of the Sabaeans immigrated to Abyssinia" (Houston, 1926, p. 124). Also, Houston suggests that not only the Sabean Yemenites but also Geez came to Aksum from the other side of the Red Sea. Houston (1926) asserts, "Ghez [*sic*] is a living relic of the ancient speech of Yemen" (p. 124). Yet another related account strengthens this position. Chaine (1909) explains:

> It [Aksum] was founded by refugees who came to the African continent when the Arsacidæ were extending their sway in the Arabian [P]eninsula, and the power of the Ptolemies was declining in Egypt. These refugees belonged to the Sabean tribes engaged in the gold and spice trade between Arabia and the Roman Empire... (Ethnology)

These immigrants introduced the south Arabian architecture of stone buildings, dams and irrigation, agricultural improvements, south Arabian polytheistic religions and South Arabian gods, Sabaean language that gave birth to Geez[7], and most importantly South Arabian political organization of the "Mukarrib System" (Selassie, 1972, pp. 29-34), to Aksum. Mukarrib is a title used by the ancient kingdom of Yemen or Sabaean with a literal meaning of "unifier" with covenants in connection to the expansion and annexation of more territories. Selassie (1972) offers a more detailed explanation:

> The Mukarrib was most probably a king with three-fold power: he was a high priest, absolute judge, and commander-in-chief on the battlefield. This was because it was believed that he was a direct descendant of God and therefore his supreme rule should be accepted absolutely. His divine descent dictated also his right as supreme judge, and on the battlefield by his divine power, he always conquered his enemies. (p. 30)

With the little exception of the replacement of *Mukarrib* with *mlk*, later king (Selassie, 1972, p. 33), the Sabaean political organization became the foundational feature of both the Aksumite and the Abyssinian kingdoms. Mukarrib was a unifier of the tribes, or Malek (*mlk*) the chiefs of the tribes, as "king of kings" was in the Aksumite and Abyssinian kingdom. There is a striking similarity between the Sabaean and the Abyssinian political organizations. There is no doubt the same feature of the new political organization brought to the continent from south Arabia by these immigrants prevailed intact throughout the historical kingdoms of Aksum and Abyssinia starting, from the first century CE up to the fall of the Abyssinian monarchy in 1974.

The fourth account is the assertion by some scholars that the kingdom of Aksum was an indigenous kingdom established by the indigenous Kushite people. This account, however, is the least supported with historical and archaeological evidence. It is supported by the oral traditions of most of the Cushite peoples who inhabit this part of Africa.

The fifth account is colonial. There is a claim that the kingdom of Aksum was established as a post-Hellenistic colony of Greek traders who controlled the lucrative trade from the hinterlands of East Africa to the port of Adulis. This colonial Aksum also controlled the trade on the southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden and traded with the Roman Empire. This account has little evidence than the fact that the well-known kings of Aksum were Greeks, the Greek language was the *lingua franca* in the region, and influences of Greek civilization and culture, including in architecture and worship, are present in the region.

Even though the kingdom of Aksum was primarily a city-state based at Aksum city, its spheres of influence initially encompassed perhaps most of present-day Eritrea and the northern mountainous regions of Tigray State in the Ethiopian Federation (see Figure 1). Later it expanded south to the mountains and plateau of the northern Amhara State. In 350 CE, it conquered the declining kingdom of Kush located to its northwest in present Sudan and annexed its capital, Meroe. By this time, the Aksumites kings had conquered large territory both in Africa and in southern Arabia. On one of the inscriptions by the unidentified king of Aksum (probably Aphilas) with no date (but most probably in 3rd century CE and surely, before the kingdom accepted Christianity) elaborates the conquest of the king:

> Of the kings that went before me, I am the first and only one to have subdued all these peoples by the grace granted to me by my mighty god Ares, who also beget me. It is through him that I have subdued all the peoples that border upon my empire, to the east as far as the land of perfumes, to the west as far as the land of Ethiopia and Sasu…. (Jones & Monroe, 1935, pp. 23-24)

It may be important to note at this point that "Ethiopia" in this context was a foreign country to the Aksumites just conquered around 3rd century CE. It is well known that this "Ethiopia" was Kush, the true ancient Ethiopia. Aksum was not Ethiopia. King Aeizanas of Aksum, in early 300s CE, was known as, "King of Aksum, Hyimyar, Raidan, Saba, Salhin, Siamo, Bega, and Kasu [Kush], King of Kings[8], son of unconquered Mahrem (in Greek Ares)" as his official title of the protocol (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 24). In the trilingual inscription, the Greek text used "Ethiopia" while the Sabaean and the Ge'ez text used "Habasa" instead of Kasu (Sellassie, 1972, p. 94).

From the third to fourth century CE, Aksum became a wealthy and dominant trading city-state in the region with remarkable military organization and stone architecture (Reid, 2009a, p. 385). It had a formidable navy that dominated the southern Red Sea. It built many decorated and undecorated monolithic obelisks and planted them in and around the city of Aksum. The obelisks Park and elaborate underground tombs in the city of Aksum have been considered the highest level of achievement of the Aksumite civilization. The Abyssinian people, in particular, and Ethiopia, in general, take huge pride in the Aksumite civilization that has produced beautiful and precise carving and decoration of gigantic obelisks and stylish buildings.

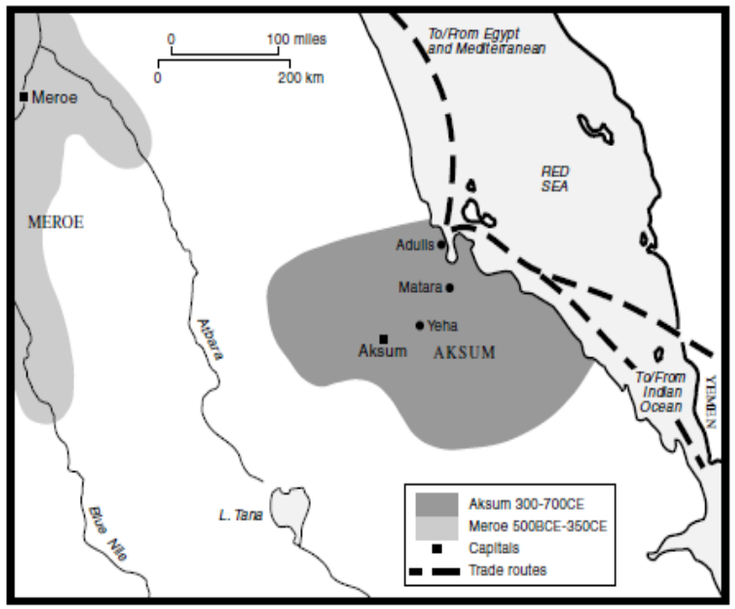

Figure 1: Aksum from 4th –7th century CE

Kevin Shillington (Ed.) (2005). Encyclopedia of African History. Vol. I, A-G. Fitzroy Dearborn: London and New York. Page 38. © 2005 Taylor & Francis Group.

Towards the mid of the fourth century CE, Aksum became the Christian Kingdom, after King Ezana had accepted Christianity (Zewde, 2002). According to Abyssinian Church records, the public accepted Christianity[9] together with the *Atse* in 327 CE. The new religion became state religion[10] at once. The Aksumite kingdom became one of the first few countries to accept

Christianity[11]. The Kingdom of Aksum was the first in Africa to declare the new religion a state religion. Because of this, Aksum (Ethiopia) has preserved many of the old books of scripture and the oldest translations of the books that cannot be found anywhere else. Consequently, it has maintained a unique and ancient brand of Christianity. With only about two hundred years of interruptions, from the fall of the Aksumite kingdom to the emergence of the Zagwean Dynasty, Christianity would remain the state religion of the Zagwean Dynasty (916-1270) and the Abyssinian Kingdom (1270-1974).

During the sixth and early seventh century CE, Aksum controlled a significant part of the southern Arabian Peninsula. In the early 6th century CE, Aksum crossed the Red Sea into Arabian Peninsula and extended its territory with the extension of its rule over the Himyaritic kingdom of southern Arabia. *Atse* Kaleb made two successful military expeditions in 523 and 525 CE "to quell Jewish rebellions against his suzerainty and to relieve the besieged Christians in Nagran" [12](Tafla, 1987, p. 932). The Roman Empire was an ally of the Kingdom of Aksum in its affairs in southern Arabia. According to Raymond E. Dumett (2009, p. 196), Emperor Justin, Justinian's uncle, offered to assist the kingdom of Aksum in its invasion of Himyar from 524 to 525 CE, and there were diplomatic and commercial contacts between Aksum and Byzantine later during the reign of Justinian.

During the first half of the 6th century, Aksum tolerated Islam and hosted the first Muslims. Prophet Mohammed sent them, based on earlier connections. Also, it is highly likely that Prophet was influenced by people around him who had an Aksumite connection. These include *Bilal ibn Rabah* (Bilal al-Habashi- Bilal the *Habasha*)[13] and *Ummu Aymen* (Barakah)[14]. According to Richard Pankhurst (1993), Abd al- Muttalib, the grandfather of Prophet Mohammed who also raised the Prophet, might have advised taking refuge in Abyssinia because he had known it from his business travels there. The first Muslims were sent to Aksum in the early decades of the seventh century when they were persecuted in Arabia. This was at the very start of Islam under the Prophet Muhammad. As a result, the first Christian-Islam encounter in the world started in Aksum before Islam took ground under the leadership of Prophet Mohammed at its home in Arabia with the friendly reception and protection offered to the persecuted first followers (*Sahabah*)[15] of Prophet Muhammad who sought refuge at Aksum- a Christian Country. The Christian kingdom of Aksum protected those *Sahabah*. They were free to practice their religion in Aksum. In so doing, King Armah (r. 608-638?) became the first king that gave recognition to Islam. After the Prophet had secured the upper hand in the struggle in Arabia, most of the *Sahabah* returned; some remained[16].

There are claims, though mainly in the Arabic literature, that the Aksumite Christian king had accepted Islam. Because of the protection and hospitality,

the Kingdom of Abyssinia offered to the Sahabah, King Armah (also known as Nejashi Asshama) and Prophet Muhammad remained friends [17] and exchanged letters on the faith of Islam. On the invitation sent to King Armah (Nejashi Ashama) by Prophet Mohammed to accept Islam, King Armah responded by saying that he accepted Islam. Among others, King Armah wrote back to the Prophet his confirmation of acceptance of Islam by writing his Shehada. He wrote to the Prophet Muhammad:

> There is no god but Allah. Who has brought me to Islam. … I testify that you are the Apostle of God, and I have sworn this in the presence of Jaæfar, and have acknowledged Islam before him. ... I attaché myself to the worship of the Lord of the Worlds, O Prophet. (Budge, 1928, p. 271)

Nevertheless, the relationship between Prophet Mohamed and King Armah did not last long. King Armah died shortly. The cause of his death is not clear. This could be partly because Abyssinian Chronicles tells nothing about the history of the period 600-970CE (Budge, 1928, p. 269). Some claim that he died because of the enmity and isolation he endured from embittered Christian clergy on his conversion. They claim that he was isolated and died from isolation. They add: King Armah was the first Muslim King to die as such.

Regarding the conversion of king Armah, Islamic and Christian records do not concur. There is no direct confirmation from the time of the event in the Christian tradition of Abyssinia that any Aksumite king had accepted Islam in the first place. On the other hand, the historical records of the conversion of Aksumite Christian king, King Armah, to Islam, in the very time of the life of the Prophet with such glittering historical connection between the Sahabah and the people of Aksum, on one hand, and the friendship and trust between Prophet Muhammad and King Armah on the other hand, are plenty in Arab and Islamic historical records. Lapiso G. Delebo, one of the prominent Ethiopian historians who has researched and studied the history of Abyssinia and the peoples of the Ethiopian Federation, confirmed recently that the Arab historians of the day wrote that King Nejashi Ashama (Armah) of Aksum was converted to Islam according to the invitation by the Prophet in 636, and consequently, upon his death in 638, the Prophet had prayed for the king in Medina in a manner as due to a Muslim (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C., p. 191). On the contrary, such is nowhere to be found in the Christian and Abyssinian historical records.

The absence of such records in the Christian kingdom where the Church and the State were the same for over one and half millennium, however, can be explained. From a religious point of view, it is understandable that the writers of Abyssinian history being Christian monks themselves may have

deliberately avoided such a record that would make Islam, instead of Christianity, the choice of its king. Also, it would falsify the fervent belief that Aksum and Abyssinia have been Christian kingdoms since the 4th century CE. To erases this part of the history that it found disturbing, the state Christian church and the Christian kings of Abyssinia did not only been vehemently denied the conversion of King Armah to Islam but also the existence of such a king by the name Armah or Nejash. The only later historical record was written by an Abyssinian, though disputed, that unequivocally states the acceptance of Islam in Ethiopia in the seventh century is that of Atsme Giroegis's *History of Galla*[18] [Oromo] *and the Kingdom of Shewa*. He wrote, "Maruye, Balaw, Kalaw, and Ethiopia became Muslims in his ['Usman ibn 'Affan] time" (Tafla, 1987, p. 257).

Furthermore, the role of the Kingdom of Aksum in the success of Islam in Arabia is missing from the Abyssinian records. The participation and contribution of the Aksumite kingdom and people to the success of Islam and the war of Prophet Muhammad have been recorded in the Islamic histories of the Arab world. The participation and contribution of the Aksumite kingdom and people during the formative stages of Islam are summarized by Lapiso G. Delebo.

> During the five decades from 615-661 the Ethiopian [Aksumite] *Atse* government and people, arming and taking care of their providences by themselves, lined up with Prophet Muhammad and with his Caliphs, Abubakar, Umar, Usman, and Ali in the struggles that were made against internal and external oppositions forces to save the Arabic Islamic religion, government, and civilization from destruction; they made great participation and contribution to the [victory of Islam]; and this has been recorded by the Arab leaders, followers, and authors, the owners of the history who have given their testimony for the generation and the world [Translation from Amharic]. (Delebo 1999 Eth. C., p. 36)

Nevertheless, due to the antagonism that gradually developed between Christianity (the state religion of the Aksumite, Zagwean Dynasty (kingdom) and Abyssinian kingdom) and the Islamic Sultanates in the Horn of Africa region, the historiography of both sides tend to present the two as non-cooperating, dissociated, and often as arch enemies. The two sides continued to conduct both peaceful businesses of trade and violent raids and counter raids for several centuries as competing for politico-religious entities. The Christian-Islam war of 1527-1543 aggravated the situation. After this religious war that devastated both sides, the animosity, rather than the cooperation, was given more emphasis until finally the Islamic Sultanates were destroyed and the

Muslims fall under the political control of Christian elites and at least officially, the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia, Christian Empire of Abyssinia, and the Christian Empire of Ethiopia.

Since Christianity lost its status as the state Church in 1974[19], signs of informal acknowledgment of the conversion of the Aksumite king to Islam have started to be seen among the Ethiopian public and government. The long-ignored historical evidence by Abyssinian Christian historians and chroniclers has now come to the light. In Islamic traditions[20], in both Ethiopian Federation and elsewhere, the story of the conversion of Al-Nejashi to Islam during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad is no less true than the words of the Prophet. Historians are however still divided between the two sides of the story based on their religious affiliation. The Christian historians find it difficult to admit that a Christian king was converted to Islam at the incredibly early stage of its expansion. Muslim historians and Muslim societies, who constitute more than a third of the population of the federation, on the other hand, take huge pride in it.

A permanent marker of the history, nonetheless, is preserved in the historical presence of al-Nejashi Mosque and cemetery believed to be that of the *Sahabah* that remained in the present Tigray State of the Ethiopian Federation. During the fifteen years of their stay in the kingdom of Aksum, about twenty of the Sahabah died and were buried in the Aksumite kingdom (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C, p. 209). Some of the tombs at Al-Nejashi cemetery are believed to be that of the Sahabah and preserved as such. Moreover, the tomb of King Ahsama is also believed to be found in the cemetery. This ancient mosque has now become one of the tourist attractions and the symbol of religious tolerance and the contribution[21] of the kingdom of Aksum to the protection of the *Sahabah* and consequently to the survival and expansion of Islam. Both the federal government and the State government of Tigray have been promoting Al Nejashi Mosque with this historical backdrop, despite the opposition of the *Orthodox Tewahdo* Church.

The Aksumite kingdom was one of the early-civilized kingdoms in the world. Its civilization is evident in the massive obelisks (some of which are still standing in the city of Aksum) and the impressive architecture both standing and in ruins. It was one of the great kingdoms of the time competing with kingdoms of Persia, Rome, and China on trade seaboard trade. It had trade links to ports and trading posts of the Persian Empire, ancient India, and the Roman Empire. The Aksumites facilitated trade with the then world powers by minting its currency starting from the early 4th century.

By the 6th century CE, Aksum had become a multi-national, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual kingdom. The nations of the kingdom of Aksum included at least Aksum, Himyar, Raidan, Saba, Salhin, Siamo, Bega, and Kasu in the

trilingual (Greek, Sabaean, and Geez) victory inscription of Ezana. These nations, like many other nations of other kingdoms and empires of the day, lived together under the banner of one central government. There is no historical evidence that demonstrates how authority was shared among the constituent nations in the empire. What is evident is the Habashat and Agazi ethnic groups had dominated the local chiefdoms. Historical records since the 3rd Century CE show that the nations in the kingdom were paying tribute to the central monarch. Besides, there is no clear evidence that the central monarch wanted more than the due tribute from the subjects except, as may be needed, that the nations were required to defend the kingdom being drafted in the royal army. There is also no record of the enslavement of any of these nations following their total conquest. The nations, by paying the tribute, secure for themselves protection from other competing powerful neighborly nations or kingdoms. At the same time, it would not be far from the reality of the time to suggest that, by the same mechanism, they also entitled themselves for their self-administration with a certain degree of autonomy. Such practice may have continued until after accepting Christianity. The official language of the kingdom was Geez. However, Greek was commonly spoken in the city and trading posts. Also, the conquered nations must have their own languages, which continued to be spoken in the kingdom. The Christian kingdom of Aksum, therefore, was multinational and multilingual.

Notes to Chapter 3

1 Both claimed descent from Israel. The legendary competition between the two, for legitimacy to the throne of the kingdom, was on the claim of descent from the two houses: House of Moses and House of Solomon.

2 The accusation was not only founded on the legend they created but also impractical. Even if there existed such a throne, it had been lost starting from the fall of the Aksumite kingdom in the late 6th century for almost two-century or more before the Zagwean Dynasty came into being in the 10th century. Accusing the Zagweans of usurping a throne that had been lost for such long was absurd. It would have been appropriate had they accused the government of Yodit Gudit for that because she was the one who reigned in Aksum after allegedly destroying the Kingdom of Aksum and its capital, Aksum city. The Zagwean Dynasty could be a completely new kingdom. It was a Cushitic indigenous kingdom, not Semitic, unlike the Aksumite Kingdom. It may not have been related to the kingdom of Aksum at all. It may have been included in the succession of the story of Abyssinia in an attempt to connect it with the Kingdom of Aksum and to the legendary Kingdom of Menelik I using the Cushite Kingdom as a linchpin presenting it as part of the chain of succession. Have historians had records from those long dark centuries (from 7th –10th), they would have made it public and the truth would have been known.

3 It was only after the fall of the Zagwean Dynasty in the 13th century that the "restored" monarchy started to assert its decent according to this legend. From the historical circumstance and the power struggle that was mainly based on the legitimacy of the monarchy on decent, it is clear that the legend may have had more importance for the legitimization of the rule of the Monarchy than serving as evidence for history.

4 According to Sellassie (1972, p. 27), the Arab tribes who migrated across the Red Sea at Bab el-Mandab (The Gate of Tears) were many. Only these two were well known. The present southern Ethiopian people of Ma'init may have originated from the kingdom of Ma'in, which was the oldest of the four, i.e. Ma'in, Saba, Kataban, and Hadramawt kingdoms, in southern Arabia at the start of the migration across the Red Sea to Africa during the Greco-Roman transition period in the Middle East in the last century BCE.

5 Budge (1928, p. 122) asserts that Habashat was recognized as the name of the Abyssinian territory as early as the fourth century CE.

6 According to Budge (1972, p. 578), Ge'ez gave way to the latter Semitic languages: Amharic and Tigre. Amharic, according to Budge, was derived not directly from Ge'ez but a dialect of Ge'ez spoken south of Aksum and it spread in all directions in the 14th century. However, it was derived from three different languages: Ge'ez, Tigre, and Arabic (Tafla, 1987, p. 207). Tigrigna is

another dialect of Ge'ez that emerged probably in the 15th century as a non-literary language (Budge, 1928, p. 578).

7 According to Lapiso G. Delebo, the first written record in the Geez alphabet around the 2nd century CE and its vocalization and grammar was developed during the reign of *Atse* Ezana (r. 320-344) (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C, p. 223).

8 The nomenclature of "king of Kings" is an adoption from the title of kings of Assyrian (Shar Sharim) and the Shâhs of Persian and Iran (Xshayathiya Xshayathiyanam, Shâhanshâh).

9 The story, according to Rufinus (d. 410 CE), is a certain Meropius, a scholar and trader from Tyre shipwrecked at the Aksumite shore of the Red Sea. Meropious died but the two young relatives (Frumentius and Aedesius) were given as slaves to King Ella Amida of Aksum. The King made Frumentius made treasurer and Audesius Royal Cup Bearer. Upon the death of the king, Frumentius and Aedesius, now fully-grown adults, remained mentors of the son, Ezana, the heir of the king. By the time Ezana became of age, Frementious went to Alexandria to request the pope to send a bishop to Aksum to lead the Christianity that had taken ground. The Pope decided to make Frumentious himself a bishop. Frumentius, therefore, was consecrated as the first bishop of Aksum and all of Africa. Coming back to Aksum, he succeeded in converting King Ezana, as evidenced by Ezana's fourth stone inscription, from paganism to Christianity and the king made Christianity the state religion. Frumentius was named Abba Selama Kesate Berhan- Father of Peace, the revealer of Light, by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Some sources however claim that King Ela Amida had two twin sons, Ezana and Sayzana, who co- reined. In most cases, however, only Ezana is mentioned. Archaeological findings and stone inscriptions of those days do not confirm this claim. An elaborate legendary story about the twin brothers, however, is common.

10 Emperor Constantine I's Edict of Milan tolerated Christianity in 313 in the Roman Empire. Christianity became the state church of the Roman Empire with Emperor Theodosius's Edict of Thessalonica in 380CE.

11 Other traditions claim that Christianity came to Ethiopia much earlier. It claims that the first to be converted to Christianity, even before Apostle Paul, according to the story in the New Testament (Acts 8: 26-37 KJV), was the Ethiopian Eunuch of Queen Candace according to the story in the Bible (Acts 8: 26-37 KJV). St. Philip, the apostle, baptized the Eunuch. He is said to have been Queen Candace's steward who lived in Gaza, the land King Solomon had given to his son Menelik I, the founder of the legendary "Solomonic" Dynasty. Upon his return to his queen, the Eunuch baptized the queen. The tradition pushed the line further and claimed that queen Candace built the first church of St. Mary of Zion at Aksum. It is said that she received the foundation stone of the church from the Apostles from Jerusalem. This tradition further claims that, in consequence, the Abyssinians are the first Christians in the world. Nevertheless, through time, the Abyssinian Church started to distance itself from such a

cloudy floating claim. There were at least four queens were known by that name and the one referred in the Acts is the queen of Meroe. For more details, see Budge (1928). *A History of Ethiopia: Nubia and Abyssinia* (According to the Hieroglyphic inscriptions of Egypt and Nubia, and the Ethiopian chronicles), Volume I p.112-113 and Volume II: 160-161.

12 Presently it is a town and the area around it is in northern North Yemen in southern Saudi Arabia (Tafla, 1987, p. 953).

13 Bilal was the first non-Arab convert to Islam. As a Muslim, he was so determined for his faith. He was so loved by the Prophet and remained a close companion of the Prophet throughout all the times. He did not only got the "miraculous voice" to call the faithful for prayer but also served as an instrumental symbol for Islam's universalism: religion for all- multinational, multi-ethnic, and free of race and biases.

14 The son of Abd al- Muttalib, father of Prophet Muhammad, Abdullah, had an Ethiopian woman as a slave. Her name was Barakah, later called Umm Aymen. Barakah attended the birth of Prophet Mohammed. She was the first to hold him. When the mother of the Prophet, Amina had left him at home for her travel, she instructed her son, the future prophet, to Barakah saying to her, "Be a mother to him, Barakah. And don't ever leave him." Baraka became his replacement mother starting when he was six years old. She breastfed the Prophet when he was a child. She took care of him as her son. Prophet Mohammed witnessed her care and her love for him by saying, "she has been my second mother," and "mother after my own mother. She is the rest of my family." (For further details, see Pankhurst, R. (1993, pp. 19-31), Redha, M. (1999), Samuel (2000 Eth. C). and http://www.soundvision.com/Info/history/bkayman.asp)

15 In the first batch were 11 men and 4 women who arrived at Aksum in 613CE. Among them were closer relatives of the Prophet Mohammed: his daughter Rukyah bint Muhammad and the cousin Ja'far. In the second batch that arrived in 615 were 83 men and 18 women. One of the Sahabah in this batch, Umm Habibah returned to marry Prophet Mohammed and the Aksumite king sent her a dowry on the occasion. For details, see Erlich (2010).

16 A new less likely and less accepted legend was developed late in the 18th century that united the House of Solomon with the House of Mohammed. It has that some of the remained Sahabah got married to the local chiefs that established the local Mohammedan House in Wollo province in the ancient center of the Zagwean Dynasty. Some kings have emerged from that house-notably King Muhammad Ali. His descendants include the uncrowned *Atse* Lij Iyasy VI, Princess Sehin, and Etege Menen, the wife of the last king, Haile Selassie II (1892-1975). The last monarch in Ethiopia is said to have both the lineages from the Prophet Mohammed (through Menen) and King Solomon (through Haile Selassie II). Though it was far from reality, the myth served the

purpose of pacification of both politics and religion among the two biggest and most commonly and competitively followed religions.

17 The good relationship that was started remained mutually useful and peaceful until the start of the early expansion of Islam in East Africa during the late 7th century and its threat of the conversion of the kingdom into Islam in the 15th century.

18 "Galla" is a pejorative and scornful name with not yet identified linguistic origin. It was given to the Oromo mainly by the Amhara during the late 16th century as a tool for psychological warfare against the Oromo at the time the Oromo overwhelmingly defeated them and drove them out of most of the territories that they had occupied from them. The Oromo do not welcome the use of the term. The Oromo consider it insulting. Its use with its old connotation is unlawful in Ethiopia. It is used only for historical consumption. I decided to replace the term with its proper equivalent in this work without losing the trace of its historical use. Thus, whenever the Oromo people are referred to as "Galla" in old works that are directly quoted, it is replaced by "[the Oromo]" or "[Oromo]." In a paraphrase of old works that used the term, "The Oromo" or "Oromo" is used automatically. Similarly, when "Galla" refers to the language of the Oromo, indirect quotations, it is replaced by "[Afaan Oromoo]." When paraphrased, "Afaan Oromo" or "Oromo language" is used. In the titles of historical works that are cited in the text, it is left as is but followed by "[The Oromo]." In the References, it is left intact.

19 State favoritism of the Christian Church however continued during both the Derg Socialist government and the EPRDF federation. Since 1991, however Muslims of the Ethiopian Federation have been enjoying relatively deeper the freedom of worship and the equality of religions that are guaranteed by the constitution. Nevertheless, there are still many areas that are waiting for the true realization of freedom of religion and worship for the Muslims of the Federation.

20 According to the Central Statistical Authority report of 2007, the Ethiopian population is 34% Muslim (about 28 million) and 44% Christians. In the last ten years, the Muslim population is estimated to have grown to 34 million.

21 Historian and author, Dr. Lapiso G. Delebo has provided a long list of Habasha individuals who were early converts and at the service of Prophet Mohammad. They include Baraka Umm Ayman, Bilal ibn Ribah, King Armah (Nejash), Luqman the wise, Mihja ibn Saleh, Saleh Shukran ibn Ali, Nafi Abu Bakra ibn Masruh, Aslum al-Habashi, Khalid ibn Alhawari al Sabachi, Alaswas al Habash, Dhu Mihden, Dhu Muhammas, Dehu Mukhbir, Dhu Dawjayn, Dhu Munahib, Asim al-Habashi, Nayil al-Habashi, Abu "lQit al-Habashi, Yassar al-Habashi, Wahshi al-Habashi. Bulaha al-Habashiya, Barira al-Habashiya, Shagira al-Habashiya, Nabgha al-Habashiya, Aslum al-Bujawi, Ayman al-Habashi al-Makki, and Ata ibn Abi Ribah Aslum al Nakki. For details of the participation of these

individuals in the establishment of Islam under Prophet Muhammad, see Delebo, 1999 Eth. C., p. 188-194).

CHAPTER 4

THE "DARK AGE" (CA. 650-1250 CE)

Towards the end of the seventh century of the Common Era, the great Christian kingdom of Aksum started to decline. This was mainly because of the overexploitation of its farmland, shift in the trade routes from the Red Sea to the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf (Duiker and Spielvogel, 2001), and the rapid expansion of Islam in the Red Sea region that had cut it off from the rest of the world. Soon the kingdom not only became land locked because of its disconnection from the Red Sea and Arabia but also became, with some exaggeration, "a Christian Island in a Muslim sea" (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2001, p. 224).

As Aksum fade out into becoming history, the political history of the region entered what is referred to by some Abyssinian historians as the dark era.[1] The "darkness" is attributed to the decline of the civilization of Aksum, the isolation of the kingdom from the rest of the world, and the obscurity of historical records. There is little historical evidence on what took place in the region that was formerly under the control of the Aksumite Kingdom from about 650-1250 CE. The first round of the "dark" era lasted approximately two hundred years from 650-850[2] until the so-called pagan queen Judith[3] (locally known as Yodit Gudit, Esato, or simply Gudit) destroyed the kingdom in 870s and laid the capital of the kingdom, Aksum city, in ruin. The Christian country (or the kingdom of Aksum if it had survived until then) falls under the non-Christian rule forcing the dedicated monks to take refuge to tops of hills

and mountains and in caves where they built the now renowned hilltop monasteries and cave churches in the Tigray State of the Ethiopian Federation.

After the total collapse of the Aksumite kingdom and under the non-Christian rule, the second round of the Dark Era followed from 850- 1100 CE. Just as the first, it is another obscure time in the history of the kingdom. Judith ruled the kingdom with almost no trace of history left behind. Only legends have few things to tell about the queen in a demonizing tone that sounds like an outright hatred presenting her as a monster and as the enemy of Christianity.

During the two phases of the "dark ages", the highly fragmented and inconsistently recorded historical traces about the kingdom were to be found only from records of Coptic Church in Egypt[4] and Arab historians and geographers. The former contented itself with the narratives of administration and assignment of bishops to the Aksum Christian Church that had been under the Coptic Church. The latter focused mainly on the relationship that existed between the Aksum Christian king and Prophet Mohammed in the early 7th century when Aksum hosted and protected the first followers of the prophet, known as the first *Sahabah* (Companions), and expansion of Islam in the horn of Africa region. Thus, neither the Coptic records nor the Arabic documents have preserved a significant historical record of the region during its "dark age."

Furthermore, the history of the Zagwean[5] Dynasty, which replaced the kingdom of the so-called pagan Queen Gudit and its relations with the Kingdom of Aksum is not sufficiently recorded. In the early 12th century, the rule of the Zagwean Dynasty, i. e. the dynasty of the Agew finally replaced the "kingdom" of *Gudit* in an obscure way. It is less clear how the Agew took power from Gudit, or whether the latter was a successor of the former. It is also less clear whether they were the same with only change of state religion or whether they were two different polities but taken as one due to lack of historical records. It is also less clear whether the Agew are people with different linguistic (Cushitic Agew as opposed to the Semitic Geez) and ethnic (endogenous) backgrounds. The connecting cornerstone between the historic kingdom of Aksum and the Agew "Dynasty"/ kingdom, out of the fact that both rulers ruled the same region, was Christianity. The Agew restored Christianity as the state religion.

The Zagwean Dynasty (920-1270) ruled the present Tigray State and northern part of Amhara State for about 350 years. It set up its new capital some 200 kilometers southeast of the city of Aksum at *Adefa* in the Bugna district of Amhara State. Its cradle land or direction of population movement before taking power and setting up its political center is however not known. It is also less clear whether the Agew people were one of the strong nations that had lived under the rule of the kingdom of Aksum or whether they

developed the power to become a great nation only after the fall of the kingdom. Once in the power of ruling the region, however, it gradually expanded its territory south from Aksum. This expansion line into the north of the ancestral land of the Oromo, which stretched from north of Somalia through the southern Ethiopian region up to River Dawa (Abdullahi, 2005, p. 332) would be followed aggressively by its successor, the Abyssinian Kingdom for many centuries to come.

Except for the list of its kings and some legendary stories about them, the history of the Zagwean Dynasty/Kingdom largely remains absent in the body of Abyssinian history. In addition to the obscurity of history in Coptic and Arabian records during the two rounds of "dark" eras, little is recorded in the local chronicles. The Christian chroniclers in their isolated hilltops and caves were detached from the "earthly" life of politics and predominated with "heavenly" works. The native Aksumite Christian chroniclers were occupied predominantly with making legends until the thirteenth century when the Abyssinian chronicles started to assume historical character (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 44). For the three centuries, until the Portuguese and the Jesuits had come to Abyssinia in the 16th century, the church and court chroniclers remained the only authors. Their records since then became the authoritative source of the history of the new kingdom, the Kingdom of Abyssinia.

The non-literary historical evidence of the greatness of the Zagwean kings is revealed in the architectural and construction wonders that they left behind. The civilization during the reign of Zagwean kings is preserved in many magnificent monolithic underground churches hewn from solid rocks in the present north-eastern Amhara State. The churches were hewn marvelously underground with the vision of building a New Jerusalem in the New Zion.

The direct connection between the Kingdom of Aksum and the Zagwean Dynasty, however, has remained not firmly established. Whether the fall of Aksum was a total fall of the kingdom and hence the kingdom seized to exist or whether it was a change of government that maintained the state (the kingdom) but not the state religion is less clear. However, it appears more likely that the former was the case. If the kingdom of Aksum was no more under the ruler-ship of Yodit Gudit that "destroyed" the kingdom and its Christianity, that was the end of the Kingdom of Aksum. The pagan queen may have established a new country in the region in place of the kingdom that she defeated. The rulership (the country) of the pagan queen lasted for about two hundred years from 650-850 CE. It is unlikely that the old overthrown Christian kingdom survived for two centuries under a reported non-Christian rule and it is more likely that the Aksumite kingdom existed no more. The fact that the Zagwean, who took political power in the region, were not Aksumites

Semites but Agew Kushites makes it evident that the Aksumite Kingdom did not survive as a state.

The portrayal of the ruler-ship of the region by the Zagwean Kushites by Abyssinian Christian chroniclers and some Ethiopic historians (AAE) as a continuation of the Christian Aksumite kingdom presenting it as it was only a new dynasty rather than as a new ruler-ship (country), is based only on the survival of Christianity. This, however, cannot be the proof of the survival of the kingdom, as humanity learns from history that many empires and kingdoms fell and were replaced by new ones while the religion of the people remained the same. Because Christianity survived the non-Christian two hundred years of rulership and was finally restored as the state religion under the new rulership of the Zagweans who ruled the same region for about 350 years from 920-1270 CE does not mean that the initial kingdom that accepted Christianity survived. It shows only that as the state fall and were replaced by another one, the religion of the people survived the changes and prevailed. Many kingdoms emerged and fell only to be replaced by another kingdom in Europe, for example, while Christianity, the religion of the people, survived. In general, it is more likely that the Aksum kingdom ceased to exist in the 7th century and the consecutive pagan and Christian administrations were not successors but new kingdoms who ruled the same region for over two and three centuries, respectively.

Note to Chapter 4

1 According to some historians, for example, Dr. Lapiso G. Delebo, the "Dark" Age is from 550-1300CE. He asserts that there are no historical records (stone inscriptions and or scrolls or books) in the Christian country (of Aksum and Zagweans) during the "dark" era (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C., p. 210).

2 Fragments of historical records during this period include that the kingdom of Aksum conducted large-scale piracy on the Red Sea. The kingdom frequently attacked the coasts of Arabia culminating in the sack of Jidda in 702. This triggered the Caliph Walid (705-715) to occupy the Red Sea coast of the kingdom. His action did not only halt the piracy but also cut Aksum off the Red Sea (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 45-46).

3 There are many legends are demonizing and blackmailing the queen. The rival queen was said to have ascended to political leadership from the southern non-Christian kingdom. However, truly little is known for certainty about her origin, her reign, or her capital. There are always conflicting accounts about the queen. Traditionally she is believed to have been either queen of the Felasha (Beta-Israel) or Agew and she probably was initially based around Lake Tana or in the Simen Mountain region in the Cushitic Damot region or around Lake Hayik. After the destruction, there is hardly any significant historical record of the state of the kingdom for the next three centuries.

4 The Coptic Church in Egypt had been appointing patriarchs (*Abunas*) from Egypt for the Abyssinian church from the 4th century to the 20th century except some decades during the resistance of the Zagwean Dynasty seeking appointment of local monks as Abuna and independence from the Coptic Church. Though the Ethiopian Orthodox Church used to be under the spiritual leadership of the Coptic Church for about 1600 years from 350s-1959, the involvement of the Coptic Church in Ethiopia was limited to top spiritual leadership. Ethiopian fathers controlled most of the administration of the Church. The *Abunas* had a very strong influence on the Monarchs that they coroneted; but once coronate, the *Atse*s controlled the church because they become head of both the church and the government. The deed and hagiography of the Abuna, written in faithful legendary and sometimes miraculous tones, have been complimenting part of the political history of the country; particularly at times when local records are scarce.

5 Sellassie (1972) points out that, according to various sources, the name may have possibly been derived from an abbreviation of Zewge Michael, Christian name of Mera Tekle Haimanot, the founder of the dynasty; or from Agew, the place of the origin of the Agew people; or from Ge'ez verb that means "to pursue, to chase, to persecute"(p. 239).

CHAPTER 5

KINGDOM OF ABYSSINIA (1270-1889)

The medieval Kingdom of Abyssinia was the kingdom of *Habasha,* also known as Abyssinians. It was in the northern regions of modern Ethiopia. Abyssinia (*Habasha*) is a "collective name of all the peoples between Khor Barka [north-west of Eritrea] and Shoa (with, in some places, a considerable infusion of Himyaritic or early Semitic blood from South Arabia)" (Sergi, n. d., cited in Keane, 1920, p. 469). In the early 17th century, one of the Jesuit missionaries, Lobo (1887), recorded the Kingdom of Abyssinia was "properly called Abyssinia", and the people called themselves "Abyssins" (p. 29). However, the best rendering of "Abyssins" in the local language is *Habasha.* The kingdom was limited to the most Semitic language-speaking peoples who inhabit the Amhara and Tigray States.

At present, "Habasha is a racial category that imagines ethnic Amhara and Tigayan … as part of a separate non-black entity, emphasizing Semitic origin and a mythical and direct descent from the Israeli King Solomon" (Hussein & Ademo, 2016, pp. 25-26). This constructed racial category excludes all the over seventy other nations, nationalities, and peoples of the present Ethiopian Federation. It does not represent the Kushite, Omotic, and Nilotic nations of modern Ethiopia either in its conceptual framing or in its history.

The political history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia cannot be conceived fully without some comparison to the political history of the early Islamic Sultanates

of the Ethiopian Rift Valley region of Horn of Africa and the history of the Oromo nation in the whole of the Horn of Africa region. Even though most of the historical Islamic Sultanates and most of the Oromo nation have been incorporated into the Kingdom of Abyssinia-cum-modern Ethiopia, both have had a parallel history with the kingdom. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss the political history of the Islamic Sultanates and the history of the Oromo nation parallel to the history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia whenever doing so is indispensable to the broader understanding of the historical foundation of the Ethiopian Federation.

The portrayal of the hyperbolic hagiography of the kings of Abyssinia, commonly known as chronicles, as the history of Abyssinia or the history of Ethiopia by some Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian historians, does not do justice either to modern Ethiopia and its diverse nations or their historiography. Some historians discredit the pseudo-history of Abyssinian chroniclers as either the history of the state or the history of its nations. Historian Lapiso G. Delebo (1999 Eth. C.), for example, argues vehemently that the history of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities, and peoples (NNPs) has not been written and Ethiopian (Abyssinian) written history is not the history of its peoples but that of its kings, martyrs, and saints all written by religious scribes and church chroniclers. Ethiopian history, being a transposed Abyssinian pseudo-history and a large collection of myth, fables, and religiously motivated legends, is sometimes referred to as a "failed history." The reason why it is principally referred to and understood as such is a lack of representation of the history of the majority non-Abyssinian nations, nationalities, and peoples and its foundation being more of a legend than history. It is a fact that the history of the Ethiopian NNPs has just started to be written after the formation of the Ethiopian Federation. And the written pseudo-history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia, or for that matter the Empire of Ethiopia-cum-modern Ethiopia, is far from representing the history and true identity of this diverse multi-national, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual federation.

Some Clarifications

The more historical facts are brought to light and the more fables and legends take their rightful places, the less obscure and the less confusing but the more comprehensible and clearer the political history of the Kingdom of Abyssinian and that of other nations, nationalities, and peoples of the Ethiopian Federation would become. This attempt to contribute towards the building and rebuilding of the comprehensive political history of the Ethiopian Federation is, however, not presumed to be free of opposition from some

disgruntled groups who love the pseudo-historical *status-quo* so much that they venture to defend it even at the expense of natural virtue and rationality. Who doubts that only historical facts, instead of fables, legends, and myths, will prevail as the true history of the Ethiopian Federation? In light of this, it is important to clarify briefly: (a) the *Habasha*-Abyssinia relation, (b) the relation between Abyssinian State and Abyssinian Church, and (c) the motives of the creation of the founding legend of the Abyssinian kingdom.

Habasha and Abyssinia

Some suggest that the name Abyssinia came from the Habashat Arab tribe who crossed to Aksum from Yemen (Jones & Monrore, 1935; Trimingham, 1965; Budge, 1928; Sellassie, 1972). This claim is strengthened by the etymological origin of the name, which, according to the heritage dictionary, is most probably from Arabic *Habasha* (Morris, 1971). Though some historians claim that the name Abyssinia originates in antiquity, the earliest records of the name suggest it was of recent origin. The first use of the term is recorded in the south Arabian inscription from the second or third century CE: It was referring to an account of Aksumite king *Gedarat* (Munro-Hay, 1991). In the record "*Habashat"* refers contextually to a group of people instead of a tribe. The name *Habasha* was first mentioned in 183 CE in the chronicle of a certain Hamdan prince in Arabian Sabaean language inscription on the stone that was found in Yemen at Marib ancient Sabaean city that states King Gedarat as king of Habashats and Aksumaits (Delebo (1999 Eth. C.). A few centuries later, some of the kings of Aksum have been referred to as the king of *Habasha* in Arabic sources, including the letters that are widely accepted as had been written by Prophet Mohammed himself to Nejash, the king of *Habasha* of his time. In these sources, the reference to *Habasha* continued further referring to the people of the kingdom of Aksum and the kingdom of Abyssinia.

The use of *Habasha* as the designated name of Christian highland Ethiopia, with specific reference to the Semitic language speaking Tigre, Begemeder[1] (Gondar), Lasta (Wollo), and partly Gojjam and Shewa, emerged after the conquest of the kingdom by the Islamic Adal state. The Islamic army, from across the Great Rift Valley under the leadership of the Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi (1505-1543) of Harar, conquered the Christian kingdom. This was during the campaign known as *Futuh al-Habasha* (The Conquest of *Habasha*) in the first half of the 16th century. Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi ruled the kingdom for over a decade converting nine in ten Christians to Muslims (Jones & Monroe, 1935).

Though the term *Habasha*[2] has continued to refer to the highland territory of Eritrea and northern Ethiopia, inhabited by mixed people (Arab Semitic and African Cushitic descents) who are culturally Semitized and spoke the Semitic language, it had no full representation of the political identification of the kingdom as 'Abyssinia' before the 13th century. 'Abyssinia' came to be known as the representation of the Christin Kingdom after the so-called restoration of the legendary Solomonic Kingdom Dynasty. This was after the tactical and military defeat of the indigenous Cushitic rule of the Agew Dynasty, centered at Roha. After the collapse of the Kingdom of Aksum, starting from the 7th century CE, little is known as to what regional name represented this territory and peoples as historical records from the subsequent many centuries, until the new Abyssinian kingdom and the Abyssinian Coptic Church embarked on literary works after the 13th-century "restoration," are generally missing.

For this work, the term 'Abyssinia' is employed to refer to the historic country and kingdom of Abyssinia for the duration from the beginning of the "restored" Solomonic line in the 13th century up to the early 20th century, when the Empire of Abyssinia which was built by *Atse* Menelik II was politically transformed to Empire of Ethiopia-cum-modern Ethiopia. This historical country and kingdom are divided presently into the Amhara and Tigray states of the Ethiopian Federation and the State of Eritrea. It covered most of the Amhara and Tigray states and most of southern Eritrea. It is referred to as 'Abyssinia Proper' for distinction.

Abyssinia Proper is the core historic state of modern Ethiopia. Sometimes in its long history, it had occupied some territories as military colonies using the strategies of settling resident armies and threat of force to temporary exact tributes and submission in its southern and eastern borderlands (see Figure 2). It had been in a protracted conflict with its neighbor, particularly with the republican Oromo and the Muslim sultanates. Abyssinia Proper finally annexed and colonized the rest of the present federation in the last decades of the 19th century creating the present borders of the Ethiopian Federation.

State and Church in Abyssinia: Absolute Unity

The political history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia starts with the Coptic Church-led conspiracy of the "restoration" of the so-called Solomonic Dynasty. In 1270, Yekuno Amlak (r. 1270-1285) overthrew the Zagwean Dynasty. It was made possible with the zealous support of the Christian Church in Shewa[3] through Tekle Haimanot (1215–1313), founder of the monastery of Debre Libanos and in Haik (Wollo) through learned monk Abba Yesus Moa (1206-1282), founder of the monastery of St. Stephen. Selassie (1972, pp. 281-287) explains that the former was only a temporary bishop and a close relative of Yekuno Amlak. He had the desire to enthrone his relative

and himself become a bishop to lead the spiritual life of the kingdom is under the Egyptian appointed Archbishop. Traditionally the Coptic Church in Egypt appointed Archbishop to Abyssinia since the convention of the Aksumite kingdom to Christianity in the 4th century CE. In the deal for the "restoration" of the Solomonic Dynasty by overthrowing the Zagwean Dynasty, he was offered one-third of the land of the kingdom for the church. The latter was an influential monk in the court of the Zagwean Dynasty. He was also offered the same one-third of the land for the church but also a politico-ecclesiastical position known as *Aqabe Se'at*,[4] responsible for internal and external affairs of the kingdom as a high palace official[5]. Yesus Moa had known and was impressed by Yekuno Amlak when the latter attended his lessons at the monastery in Haik. Tekle Haimanot and Yesus Moa were bonded with ecclesiastic sentiment and assurance for the "restoration" of the Solomonic Dynasty. Selassie (1972) asserts that the two were the architects of the "restoration" of the so-called Solomonic line (p. 283). Yekuno Amlak's Shewan army[6] succeed in defeating Ne'akuto Le'ab (also known as Yitbarek), the last king of the Zagwean Dynasty, at Daga Qirqos in Gaynt, Begemeder[7] (Selassie, 1972, p. 284). Whether Yekuno Amlak murdered Ne'akuto Le'ab, as tradition has, it or whether he died of natural cause, as hinted in the negotiated settlements between the Zagwean and the "Solomonic" Dynasties, is not known for certain.

The Church was rewarded according to the promised deal after the so-called restoration of the Solomonic Dynasty by eliminating the last king of the Zagwean Dynasty. What has been known for sure is that the "restored" Christian "Solomonic" Dynasty replaced the Zagwean Dynasty and Yekuno Amlak became its first king. Also, as offered in the deal, the church became entitled to one-third of the land of the kingdom (Zewde, 2008, p.52). As a return to his political role of enthroning Yekuno Amlak, Tekle Haimanot[8] became the *Etchege*[9], the highest administrative and doctrinal post a *Habasha* monk could hold in the church until the 1960s preceded only by the Metropolitan appointed by the Coptic Church in Egypt. In return, Tekle Haimanot authored the legendary storybook to connect Yekuno Amlak to the "Solomonic" Dynasty and to keep the line of succession to the throne in the family of Yekuno Amlak (Zewde, 2008, p. 51). The Coptic Church in Egypt later canonized Tekle Haimanot, the only canonized person from among Abyssinians[10].

Since then, the kingdom and the Church remained in a harmony that can be exemplified as that of between wax and gold. The church continued to be the ideological and political tool of the kingdom[11]. The church of Abyssinia exercised enormous political power including in the process of the Abyssinian colonization of the southern NNPs of the Ethiopian Federation, including the

Oromo. It promoted the supremacy of the Abyssinian people over the other peoples. Most importantly, it played a very damaging role in the production of blasphemous and polemic records on the histories and identities of the non-Abyssinian peoples. Also, the source of the culture of beggary, which has been considered socially unacceptable among most of the non-Abyssinians in the Ethiopian Federation, is traceable to the church. On the other hand, the church is credited for the expansion of traditional church-based education, church music, literary works, and building and maintenances of historical churches and artifacts in the Abyssinian kingdom and beyond.

This continued until the 1974 Ethiopian peoples' revolution that deposed the last of the so-called Solomonic monarch and severed the historical tie between the state and the church. With the declaration of the People's Republic of Ethiopia and Scientific Socialism as a new political ideology, both the power and the importance of the old church weathered away.

Motives of Legend of Origin of the Kingdom

Highlighting the motives of the creation of the legend of the origin of the Kingdom of Abyssinia at this point may help in understanding the claimed link between the Kingdom of Aksum and the Kingdom of Abyssinia and the political history of Abyssinia from Aksumite time to modern Ethiopia.

But before that, it may also help to bear in mind that the *Habashat* and Agazi[12] tribes from Yemen crossed the Red Sea to the African continent and colonized the indigenous population among whom they settled. Abyssinians were, to use Jones & Monroe's (1935) expression, "parvenu peoples". In the words of historian Sir E. A. Wallis Budge,[13] "Habashat (ሐበሻ) were foreigners," and "appear to have been regarded with no great favor by the native population, though they brought with them a civilization which was superior to their own" (Budge, 1928, p. 121). Their trading link with the civilized Mediterranean and Asian world had given them a comparative advantage over the people they had colonized. They expanded the kingdom of Aksum and named many important places in it after their place names back in their homeland of Yemen. Selassie (1972) identified many corresponding place names to that in Yemen in the province of Tigre alone. According to Selassie, the Tigrigna names of places, such as Sahart, Hauzen, Madara, Ahsea, Coloe, Serae, Biscia, and Mareb correspond to their respective counter names of Sahartan, Hausan, Madran, Ahsiyah, Cullai, Sarwan, Bahilah, and Marib in Yemen. These are reminders of how some American states and cities were named after the corresponding countries, regions, and cities of origins of its clusters of immigrant settlers from Europe. The extent of the influence of

these immigrants probably was limited to this province of Tigre, where the new settlers made it their home naming the new places after their original places from whence they had departed and crossed to the "new" continent.

However, after centuries of rule in their new world, Abyssinians had come to lose power at the beginning of the 8th century. The indigenous rivals had defeated their kingdom. Now, at the end of the 13th century, after many centuries of loss of power and with a clear understanding of the consequence of losing it again in the future, they were back to the pinnacle of political power. Under this circumstance, their overarching instinctive motive for creating the legend (the myth of origin) would be primarily survival: perpetual survival, if possible.

More specifically, Jones & Monroe (1935, pp. 16-18) identified three principal motives for the creation of the legend of the origin of the Abyssinian kingdom ("Solomonic Dynasty"). The first motive was the desire to prove their presumed ancestral origin. On this desire, they saw a similarity between the Roman and the Abyssinian legend of origin. In a similar way that the Romans "grafted on to them" the Greek civilization through Aeneas, the Trojan hero who fled to Italy and whose descendants are said to have founded Rome, the Abyssinian (through their monks) "desired to find a place for themselves in ancient history" by "grafting on to them" the Christian civilization and the glory of ancient Kingdom of Israel through the legend of Queen of Sheba and the favorable mentions of Kush-cum-Ethiopia in the Holly Bible. Even though they knew that "for most Greek writers the name Ethiopia was vague and general" (Selassie, 1972, p. 97), as the Greeks called all the land south of Egypt by the name Ethiopia because of the translation of Kush to Ethiopia, the clergy wanted to appropriate the name to the Christian Abyssinia. Besides, they found favorable mentions of the name Ethiopia in the Bible which was religiously tempting. However, there was one other thing that needed correction: shifting ancestral descent from Ham to Shem. They tried to distance themselves from Ham tactfully: they affiliated themselves with Noah and his honorable son Shem than their rightful ancestor Ham. In so doing, they avoided Noah's alleged curse of lifetime slavery on the descendants of Ham, one of which was *Ethiop*[14], who, according to Abyssinian legend, is said to have given his name to the land of Ethiopia. As a result, the Christian monks proudly, but inconsiderately, adopt the name Ethiopia to their kingdom by sometimes calling the kings "King of Ethiopia" and the descent from Shem to their genealogy. This fulfilled the desire of ancestral origin and self-serving positioning as belonging to a "blessed" race. The second motive was the desire to inherit the promises that they believe God has given to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob through Christ, the Messiah, and the Kingdom of Israel. For their desire for this to be fulfilled, they first created the myth of first-born son

(legitimate heir) from the alleged union between King Solomon and Queen of Sheba (Makeda). This son would bring the Ark of the Covenant to Aksum according to the legend. Then, they excluded the Jews. The reason for this is that they had rejected the Messiah, and therefore the promise of God. Finally, they subordinated the other claimant of the Promise, the Christian Roman Empire, to the Kingdom of Abyssinia by tracing their Emperors too to King Solomon but a descendant of the junior son. The third motive was the desire of the royal house of Abyssinia to assert their divine right to the so-called Solomonic throne. To this end, they made King Solomon anoint Menelik I, allegedly his first-born son, exquisitely with holy oil so that he and his rightful descendants are not only appointed divinely for an absolute rule but also become the distant cousins of Jesus Christ.

More importantly, however, some historians argue, the Alexandrian Coptic Church in Egypt imposed the motive on the laity in Abyssinian than it originated in Abyssinia. According to the studies by Ethiopian historian Lapiso G. Delebo (1999 Eth. C.), the legend of the Queen of Sheba (Makeda) and the fables of "Solomonic" Kingdom of Menelik I and its restoration in 13th century CE were all fabrications of Alexandrian monks of the Coptic Church of Egypt. It was created to control the spiritual life of Abyssinia, and hence their socio-economic and political lives as well as their history. Otherwise, the tradition that is founded by the legend, to use Marius Chaine's pronouncement, "finds no confirmation in the most ancient native documents, nor in any foreign writings" (Chaine, 1909).

The Making of Legend of Origin

The legend of the "restoration" of the so-called Solomonic Dynasty has a profound consequence both on the Zagwean Dynasty, the Kingdom of Abyssinia, and beyond. During the absence of recorded history of the Christian Court and government from 550-1300, the "Dark" era, the Agew Christian government (1100-1270) leaders attempted unsuccessfully to liberate their Church from the administration of the Coptic Church of Egypt (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C.). This unsuccessful attempt of the Zagweans had a lasting consequence for the future of the Church as well as the history of the Abyssinian Kingdom and beyond.

Delebo (1999 Eth. C.) explains, at length, how the Coptic Church, in the effort to crush the quest of the Zagwean Dynasty to liberate the state Church from Egyptian influence and to institute a new legend of origin, has influenced the lives of both Abyssinian and non-Abyssinian peoples of modern Ethiopia.

He points out the far-reaching consequence[15] of the legend for the Abyssinian and non-Abyssinian societies in modern Ethiopia. He states:

> However, to destroy the liberation policy and activities of the Agew government, to strengthen and expand its grand authority and economic benefit that it had on the Ethiopian [Aksumite] Church and government for 1000 years, the Egyptian Church, on one hand, in the country by organizing opposing political forces to the Agew Dynasty and government through its agent Abunas that it had aligned with itself with the successful political plot, on the other hand, through the vast records of contemplations known as *Kebra Nagast* and *Fitha Nagast* that it had brought in to the Ethiopian court, it converted the Ethiopian history to the Solomonic Jewish fairytale. … In so doing, the Egyptian Church, in *Kebra Nagast*, declared the Jewish prince and priests who came from Jerusalem established the ancient Ethiopian civilization in 1000 BC according to laws and teachings of Moses in Genesis. (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C., p. 236 citing Tekle Tsadik Mekuria and Wallis Budge) [Translation from Amharic]
>
> …
>
> The Chronicles, hagiography of saints, and deeds of martyrs that have been written in Geez language by Ethiopian Court historians from 1270 to 1855 were records of the politics, religion, and wars of the Ethiopian [Abyssinian] society and government, guided by the political thoughts of Egyptian Church that entered the country through *Kebra Nagast* and *Fitha Nagast*. … In the mentioned records of the Ethiopian [Abyssinian] societies and government, the Jews, Muslim, and believers in traditional religion, for example, the Agew, the Siemen/Falasha, the Yifat, the Hadiya, the Damot, the Adal, the Somali, the Oromo... peoples, in general, have been labeled as the arch enemies of the Ethiopian [Abyssinian] Christian people, government, and religion. The mentioned peoples were exposed to destructive wars being labeled as "invaders" in their country and land (p. 237) [Translation from Amharic]

The very origin of the "Solomonic" Kingdom of Abyssinia and its consequences were, as argued by historian Lapiso G. Delebo, a concocted legend by the Coptic Church in Egypt that gathered some fables to its support. One fable claims King Lalibella went to Egypt and collected about 60,000 Christians and the Christian Egyptian Arabs who were also believed to have built the Lalibella monolithic rock-hewn churches (Tafla, 1987, pp. 206-207). These Coptic Christian Egyptians, the Amara, may have established the

Amara[16] the community of resident armies in the locality that later came to be known as Amara Sayint, Beta-Amhara, and Wadla-Danta. The *Amara* community would gradually develop into *Ambhara* identity in Abyssinia through the amalgamation of peoples, after achieving their Egyptian mission of controlling the lives of the Abyssinians for Egypt by de-legitimizing the Cushitic origin of the people and government of Aksumites and the Agew (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C). The Amara priests implant themselves as spiritual fathers of the peoples of Abyssinia and beyond. They would achieve their designated mission only with the strategic and tactical use of Christianity and the fable of the legend of Queen of Saba and Menelik I. The latter was the brainchild of the Egyptian Coptic Church written into the now revered book of the legend, *Kebra Nagast* (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C., p. 236). The 'priest' armies, who probably modeled themselves and their operations after their contemporary Knight Templers, were able to maneuver the cognition of both the faithful and the new royal family who saw the fables to their immediate advantage of legitimizing and perpetuating their absolute rule. The fables and the legend, as noted above, were written later into historical documents and records of the Egyptian Coptic Church and starting from 13th century CE and into the documents and records of Abyssinian Orthodox Church starting from the 14th century. Since then, they continued to influence and dictate Abyssinian and other societies that they controlled.

Very recently, Fikre Tolossa Jiksa introduced a new futile tale confirming the story of thousands of people coming from Lower Egypt, their involvement in the carvings of rock-hewn churches in Lasta, and the settlement of some of these people in Amhara Saint, Wadla Delanta and Beta-Amhara as free people, practicing their culture and speaking their language (Jiksa, 2016, pp. 114-116, 180-181). These people (about ten thousand) were brought by Lalibella to help him to overthrow his opponent, king Harphe. The twist that Jiksa has added includes: the thousands of people who Lalibella brought from Egypt were not Egyptians but Amara Ethiopians. According to him, they were descendants of Amara (whom he resist originated miraculously in Gojjam, in Amhara State of the Ethiopian Federation and have lived there since then) who went to Egypt and had settled in Amar Delta. They went to Egypt from Ethiopia thousands of years ago accompanying the young Aksumay (who he claims ascended the Egyptian throne as Pharaoh Ramses) and his mother Sadoniya. Since then, they had lived in Amar Delta- the region in Egypt where he claims Joseph and his wife Merry took refuge together with their baby boy, Jesus Christ, fleeing from the persecution of Herod over two thousand of years ago. In his view, the arrival of the Egyptian Christian mercenaries (Chewa)- Amara- in the territory of the Cushite Zagweans during the reign of King Harphe was only a

homecoming. Jiksa's claims are ridiculed by the proponents of both the AAAE and the MMCE narrative.

Throughout the history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia, religiously motivated fables and myths continued to shape and reshape one society in particular. In the process of the new identity formation, the resident armies and Egyptian Christian mercenaries formed a separate Semetized-Cushitic identity in isolated mountainous regions south of the capital of the Zagewan Dynasty. The thousands of male Egyptian soldiers married thousands of local women. The offsprings of these inter-racial marriages naturally formed a mix of the race of the type know commonly today as "halfu." The resultant genetic identity was considered misguidedly as if superior to the natives as the Egyptians were considered more advanced in culture and mental calibers. Aided by the very trade of the Egyptians and the upper class that they instituted; a new identity was formed in the southern regions of the Zagwean territory where the resident army had settled. They named the new region, Tanta, Delanta, Saynt, Dawunt, etc. perhaps after names of places and regions in lower Egypt - Tanta, Delta, Asyut (or Sais), Damanhur, etc. respectively. The new civic identity was named *Amhara* from the Agew word for 'soldiers.' This society of new non-national(non-ethnic) [17] identity soon created a new language, Amharic,[18] from the mix of Geez, Tigrigna, Agew, Arabic, and Oromo languages through pidginization and creolization in Cushitic structure and Semitic accent. With the Egyptian Coptic Church and the Christian missionaries catalyzing the intended political, social, as well as spiritual changes in the indigenous kingdom of the Cushitic Agew people, the new identity brought about the Abyssinian kingdom. The kingdom would be established solely on the myth and legend that originated from the Coptic Church of Egypt in Alexandria with a civic identity called Amhara with Amara people at its center. The new Abyssinian civic identity[19], Amhara, continued to absorb indigenous peoples who were converted to Christianity, accepted the new culture, and adopted the new language (Amharic) while the liturgical and literary language remained Geez, the remnant of the Aksumite civilization. This new identity would be consolidated later to the "Ethiopian" civic identity in the late 19th century after the conquest of many nations and nationalities to the south, southwest, and southeast of Abyssinia that quadrupled its territory during the European scramble of Africa.

The Birth of the Abyssinian Kingdom

The Kingdom of Abyssinia was founded by Yikuno Amlak (r. 1270-1285). According to legend, however, the "Solomonic Kingdom was restored." According to the legend of the "restoration" of the so-called Solomonic Dynasty detailed in *Kebra Nagast*, Yekuno Amlak claimed direct descent from the last Aksumite king, Dil Naod. He comes from the Aksumite communities who fled south after the fall of the kingdom to a non-Christian warrior queen. The narrative in *Kebra Nagast* supports the claim that the Aksumites were forced to flee southwards when Queen Gudit attacked Aksum city and laid it ruin. During the reign of Queen Gudit, it is said that the Christian Aksumites were forced to leave Aksum city. They had to live in remote areas (in caves and on cliffs[20]) fleeing the persecution of the so-called pagan queen. The Christian Aksumites may have also moved further south to the present north of Shewa to the rugged mountains region for the same reason. They could expand their religion farther south from here. They could also gather some energy and support to reclaim the state power after five centuries. The Cushite Zagwean Dynasty that took power after the administration that was installed by the so-called pagan queen was not friendly to the remnants of the alleged Semitic Aksumite kingdom because of the power struggle in the region. The targets of persecution by the Zagweans, in this regard, were the direct descendants of the last Aksumite kings. One of such descendants that escaped such persecution through the reticent protection of the Aksumites that fled south, according to the legend of the "restoration" of the Solomonic Dynasty, is said to be Yekuno Amlak. By Yekuno Amlak, the royal line survived,[21]the legend and the founder of the legend, the Abyssinian Church tells us.

After the decline and fall of the predominantly Semite and Christian Kingdom Aksum in the seventh century, it was replaced by a non-Christian rule. This rule non-Christian rulership under queen Gudit, Christian traditions have it, was cruel and ruinous to Christianity and the Christian civilization. The Christian Aksumite people were forced to flee southward. Two centuries later, the Kushite Zagwean Dynasty[22] was established in the region south of Aksum. This might have served as the groundwork for the Aksumites to immigrate further south into the Oromo ancestral land. From there they assimilated the local population under the banner of Christianity and the Amharic language and finally formed two branches of Amhara and Tigre people-hood that came to be known as *Habasha* (Jalata, 2005, p. 48). The fragments of Aksumite peoples settled in territory further south in the Menz area (Jalata, 2005, p. 48). This is supported by religious records of the Abyssinian Church. Menz is a mountainous small district in the North Shewa Zone of the present Amhara State and Tekle Haymanot (1215–1313) was the founder of the famous Monastery of Debre Libanos in the present North Shewa Zone of Oromia State. According to the narrative in chapter 5: 44-51 of *Deeds of St. Tekle*

Haymanot published in 1989 (Eth. C.) by the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahdo* Church, the Aksumite had sent hundreds of missionaries into Shewa who converted thousands of people to Christianity and built many churches.

The Shewan *Habasha* base that was established in this manner would serve as the source of the two powerful Abyssinian political bases. First, the Kingdom of Abyssinia that was established by Yekuno Amlak in the late 13th century and, after having a mobile court for several centuries, finally based in Gondar from the early 17th to mid-19th century. Second, the Kingdom of Shewa that was established in Shewa in the early 17th century and would finally become the Empire of Abyssinia in the late 19th century.

The new Dynasty of Yekuno Amlak was named the Solomonic Dynasty. It claimed descent from King Solomon. The change, however, was not much more than the change of the court language from Cushitic Agewigna to Semitic, new language Amharic, but not back to Geez. On this turn of event, Reid (2005) observed:

> In order to assert its own legitimacy, the new dynasty developed the myth that they descended from King Solomon and Queen Makeda of Saba; the 'Solomonic' line claimed that it was now 'restored,' following the Zagwe usurpation, but it seems fair to say that only insofar as the monarch was once again a Semitic-speaker can Yekuno Amlak's advent to power be considered a 'restoration.' (p. 495)

The Semitic language speaker Amhara from the south had fiercely campaigned against the Cushitic incumbent Agew. Because of their self-confessed Semitic descent, they characterized the incumbent as usurpers of the "Solomonic" throne. The core element of the Amhara, like the core element of the Tigre, claimed oriental origin and Semitic heritage, including a direct connection to King Solomon of Israel. Their goal was, therefore, the "restoration" of the throne to the "rightful" heirs- who according to the new legend were the descendants of King Solomon of Israel[23].

The dynasty that began with Yekuno Amlak not only "restored" the "legitimacy" of the monarchy, but also rewrote history according to its new legend or origin. Also, as noted by Abyssinian "palace historian" Tekletsadek Mekuria, "the present Aksumite and Zagwean histories were started to be prepared in the 14th century during the reign of Amde Tsion," (Tekletsadek Mekuria quoted in Delebo 1999 Eth. C., p. 111), not during or immediately after their respective times. The then victorious group, therefore, wrote these histories retrospectively in line with a new legend with the same intent and purpose of the creation of the legend. In the process, many historical artifacts and evidence that would indicate they might otherwise have been ignored or destroyed. This would include the history of the so-called pagan queen and

her successors, the history of other nations that occupied the area, and other myth and legends of the origins of the non-Christian people in the region. This may partly explain the obscurity of the history of the region and its peoples not only from the fall of the Aksumite kingdom to the "restoration" of the Solomonic kingdom but also before that.

With the revised and custom-made history and secured legitimacy to the throne of the kingdom, the new dynasty gave birth to the new Christian kingdom. Its founder, Yekuno Amlak set to rule the newly created kingdom with strong legendary and religious backing by transforming the kingdom into the Kingdom of Abyssinia. After the "restoration" of the Solomonic Dynasty, the Aksumite kingdom, based on the connecting legend, has been better known as the Kingdom of Abyssinia. Its "divine appointed" kings continued to rule the kingdom for about seven centuries comfortably only with few interruptions.

Despite the legend, historically, the Kingdom of Abyssinia was new. There was no kingdom of Solomon in Africa in history nor there was any king by the name Menelik I nor there was the kingdom of Sheba in Africa nor was the Kingdom of Aksum "Solomonic" or related to the ancient kingdom of Israel in any historical account. These are all religiously motivated myths and legends. The Kingdom of Abyssinia, as a new kingdom, was born from the complete fusion of the Semitic aristocratic class of Aksumites who were derived south of Aksum by the expansion of the Bejja tribes from north and north-west and the indigenous Agew dominated Hamitic people (Trimingham, 1965). Many scholars uphold the same argument: that the Kingdom of Abyssinia was created new in 1270 CE.

Brief History of the Kingdom of Abyssinia

The political history of the Abyssinian kingdom (1270-1890 CE) is recorded relatively richly in the chronicles of its kings than that of the Aksumite kingdom (ca. 100-700 CE). The chronicles have recorded the history of the kings and the church in fair detail starting from the 14th century. They are however not fully reliable historical records. "Although these chronicles are regarded everywhere in Abyssinia as the supreme and final authority for the history of the country, it is impossible to accept them as historical documents in the true sense of the word" (Budge, 1928, p. ix). They, however, form the larger part of the historical complement of the kingdom. First-hand accounts of foreign explorers, missionaries, and diplomatic notables have recorded the political history of Abyssinia. Arabic historical records of the Muslim-Christian war from 1530-1543, the Portuguese records of the war and its aftermath, accounts

of explorers like the Scottish James Bruce, accounts of traders and geographers, as well as diplomatic correspondences offer an independent depiction of the political history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia.

From among the Abyssinian national archival chronicles, the self-righteous deeds of the kings written by their favorite monk accounts for the bulk of most of the political history of Abyssinia. Because of their one-sided, almost all the time taking the victorious side, they fail short of presenting, for example, the power struggle between or among many nations of the empire or religious groups is presented only from the point of view of the Christian kingdom and its kings and its church. They often depict the non-Christian, non-Abyssinia, and non-friendly to Christianity and Abyssinia either because of religion, culture, or political outlook, as savage, as an enemy, and as perpetually doomed to fail, to be defeated, and to remain sub-human.

Though such records are highly biased and susceptible to be used continuously as such, significant allowance must be taken in considering them as sources of historical facts, they remain to be the best source available. People who had no bias or had no interest to record distractedly what was unfolding in front of their eyes must continuously counter reference their use with first-hand accounts of records.

At the turn of the 14th century, the "restored" Solomonic Dynasty was intensely engaged in the politics of asserting its legitimacy to the Abyssinian throne, by claiming descent from King Solomon of Israel. The church which had crowned Yekuno Amlak (r. 1270-1285) the first of the "restored" Solomonic Dynasty (who was succeeded by a king who was symbolically crowned as Solomon I) using its competence as the only source of literary work, re(vitalized) the legend of the union between the queen of Sheba (Makeda) and King Solomon of Israel. In the effort to build an indestructible foundation for the legend, the church and the state went a great lengths in formalizing and legalizing the legend in books[24]. This affirmation of divine mandate and divine appointment of kings was followed by the book of fables known as *Kebra Nagast* (Glory of Kings) that traced the Abyssinian *Atses* lineage to the tribe of Judah was finalized half a century later with centuries of hagiographic developments and shaping dating back to pre-Christian Ethiopia (Barrera, 2006). In doing so, the new dynasty "constitutionalized" the divine appointment of its kings and their direct descent from King Solomon of Israel. The "constitutionalization" would not only legalize the legend but also would give the *Atses* the divine right to rule absolutely.

The truth is however different. The renowned Ethiopic historian and friend of Abyssinia/Ethiopia, Sir Wallis Budge (1928), vividly expressed his observations on the direful claim. He wrote:

> The truth is that Abyssinians know nothing about the true history of their country in pre-Christian times. They have always had a passionate desire to be considered a very ancient nation, and the vivid imagination of their scribes has borrowed the traditions of historical facts preserved by the Semites, i.e. Yemanites, Himyarites, Hebrews, etc., and modified them to suit the aspiration of their fellow countrymen. They possessed no list of the pre-Christian kings of Abyssinia because no Abyssinian "kingdom" existed before the time of Za Hekle whose name probably appears in the Periplus under the form Zoskales. And the first "king of kings of Ethiopia" known to us is Yekuno-Amlak (A. D. 1270–1285), who brought the whole country [Abyssinia] under his rule. (p. x)

> The history of Abyssinia during the Christian Era, as presented by the chroniclers and ascribes, until we come to the second half of the 13th century, is incomplete and, in some respects, is wholly untrustworthy …. It is the sad fact that no Ethiopic manuscript older than the 14th century is known to exist. (p. xi)

Such grand political changes based only on legends would fundamentally shape and reshape the remainder of the history of Abyssinia in many ways that the founders could not have imagined. Its immediate effect was a political exploit on the remnants of the Zagwean Dynasty. The new dynasty used the legend as political and religious propaganda to "prove" to the masses that the defeated Zagwean Dynasty was a usurper of the throne. The propaganda was a refutation to the less popular claim of the latter for direct descent from the union of Moses and his Ethiopian wife. It was also an effort to eliminate any future threat to the "restored" dynasty.

It would be unacceptable to the Agew who claimed equally, perhaps in a counterclaim to the newly emerging mythical claim, descent from ancient Israel. The political friction between the Semitic victorious Amhara and the Cushitic defeated Agew gradually took its toll on the Agew nation. The Agew people were exposed to continuous marginalization and attacks from the new rulers. Under pressure from the arriving peoples from the southeast, the Agew nation broke into two and moved west and south-west farther apart and far away from their center in the last center in Roha.

Its long-term effect would fundamentally change the political history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia. It would help the establishment of a powerful monarchy in the Horn of Africa that would continually expand its territories and impose its cultural, political, economic, linguistic, and religious dominance for many centuries on to the less powerful nations and peoples inhabiting its

southern, southwestern and eastern boundaries. In other words, it would give the kingdom the perpetual legitimacy of its kings and absolute dominance of its culture.

The Confrontations between the Christian Kingdom and the Muslim Sultanates

According to Lapiso G. Delebo (1999 Eth. C., p. 216), Islam arrived in the Horn of Africa twice: First, during 615-616 CE through the first followers of Prophet Mohammed (Sahabah) who were sent by the Prophet himself to the kingdom of Aksum; second, through *Mahkzumite* and *Hashmayit* Arab missionaries, traders, and immigrants who crossed to central Rift Valley region of Ethiopia from Hijjaz, Arabia, via Zeila starting from the second half of the 7th century (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C., p. 216). The Ethiopian Muslims strongly believe and teach that the Sahabah were the first Muslims who thought the doctrines of Islam in the Aksumite court and converted the early local followers into Islam together with *Atse* Ashama ibn Abjar (r. 600-630) (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C., p. 209). Also, they believe that the first Muslim communities known as Jeberti in Agew, Tigray, and Amhara have been established by the Sahabah. These beliefs are supported by the presence of Al-Nejashi mosque, its history and its Muslim cemeteries for the former and the 20th-century archaeological discovery of Muslim cemetery with many tombstones inscribed in Arabic some fifty kilometers south of Nejashi at Quiha, near Maqalle, the capital city of Tigray State for the later (M. Schneider cited in Delebo, 1999 Eth. C., p. 209). The historical evidence for the second arrival is plenty, preserved in the histories of the several Islamic Sultanates that thrived in the Horn of Africa region from the 9th – 16th centuries.

In parallel to the decline of the Aksumite kingdom, Islam thrived in the horn of Africa. It expanded rapidly in the coastal regions of the Horn, present-day Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia starting from the 8th century. Since then, Muslim traders between ports on the Red Sea and Gulf of Eden and the inland Horn of Africa to the left of the divide of the Great Rift Valley were the first to bring Islam into Shewa. Muslim missionaries soon followed the traders. The missionaries and the traders together established trading posts that were later developed into permanent Muslim trading towns. The town facilitated trade and continued to attract more of both Muslim and local settlers. Gradually the town non-Muslim communities started accepting Islam. Consequently, the urban communities became Islamic Sultanates.

The Muslim communities were from various origins in Arabia but had not imported their Arabian Islamic culture. Some are believed to be descendants

of the Sahabah who had intermarried with the local chiefs. Others came to the region from across the Red Sea some decades after the establishment of Islam in Arabia under Prophet Mohammed. The Argoba[25] people, in particular, are believed to have come from Arabia. According to Atsme Giorgis they are "descendants of the murderer of Ali," the last Caliph and they "came openly from Arabia in the time of Ma'awi'; and 'they were the first Muslims to penetrate Habasha" (Tafla, 1987, pp. 255, 259). The introduction of Islam into this region through the southern Arabian Arabs did not import the wholesale Arab culture. In other words, Islamization did not result in the Arabization of the local culture[26]. Because of this and through the continuous smoothing of some cross-continental cultural differences a unique and tolerant Islamic culture has evolved in Ethiopia.

As the localized Muslim communities grew, more Islamic sultanates started to emerge on the main trade routes between the mainland and the coastal regions. The first sultanate to be established was the sultanate of Shewa in 896 (Orwin, 2005a; Orwin, 2005b). Sultanates of Shewa (9th–13th century) and Ifat (13th –15th century) were the principal core of Islamic activities in northeast Shewa and served as a springboard for the gradual spread of Islam into the nearby southern areas and Wollo (Begashaw, 2009).

By the 13th century, many more Muslim states (Dahlak, Ifat, Fatagar[27], Dawaro[28], Dara, Arababani, Sharka, Bali, and Hadiyya) had emerged (Ayanu & Ruffo, 2007; Begashaw, 2009). The southern and northern Sultanates entered a power struggle that gradually weakened them. While an internal power struggle led to the decline of the *Makhzumite* Dynasty (896/7-1285 CE), a rival dynasty emerged and quickly grew powerful. Finally, in 1285**,** the *Makhzumites* were conquered by Ali ibn Wali Asma, the founder of the *Walasma* Dynasty[29] (1285-1445 CE). The latter incorporated Shewa and territories from Shewa to the port of Zeyla into their Muslim sultanate of Ifat (Orwin, 2005b, p. 492). The Sultanates of Shewa survived from the 9th to 13th centuries (Begashaw, 2009).

Around the mid 14th century, most of the modern central Ethiopian territories were under loose religious control of the Muslim sultanates of Yifat[30], Dawaro, Fatagar, Bali, and Hadiya. These sultanates cover the vast Great Rift Valley region of modern Ethiopia and the highland plain escarpments along the valley both in the northeast and southeast. Their land and population sizes are not known certainly nor is it possible to locate accurately these sultanates because of a lack of sufficiently documented territorial description or mapping. Traditions, however, locate Yifat in Shewa; Fatagar in Rift Valley region; Dawaro in Bali mountainous area, and Hadiyya at the south of Fatagar and Dawaro. Ifat survived for two centuries from 13th

to 15th. The Christian kingdom defeated it in 1415. Nevertheless, it re-emerged as Sultanate of Adal a few decades later.

The Islamic Sultanates were in a position of counterbalance to the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia.[31] The sultanates not only controlled the trade routes but also came to scramble with the Abyssinian on their courses of expansion into the vast territory inhabited by people who confess traditional religion (see Figure 2). This would make the Muslim kingdoms (Islamic Sultanates) competitive to the Christian Kingdom for both territorial expansion and proselytization. Moreover, they served as a source of expansion of Islam among the Oromo and other southern nations whom the Abyssinian Kingdom wished to convert to Christianity. These brought the two on a direct collision course.

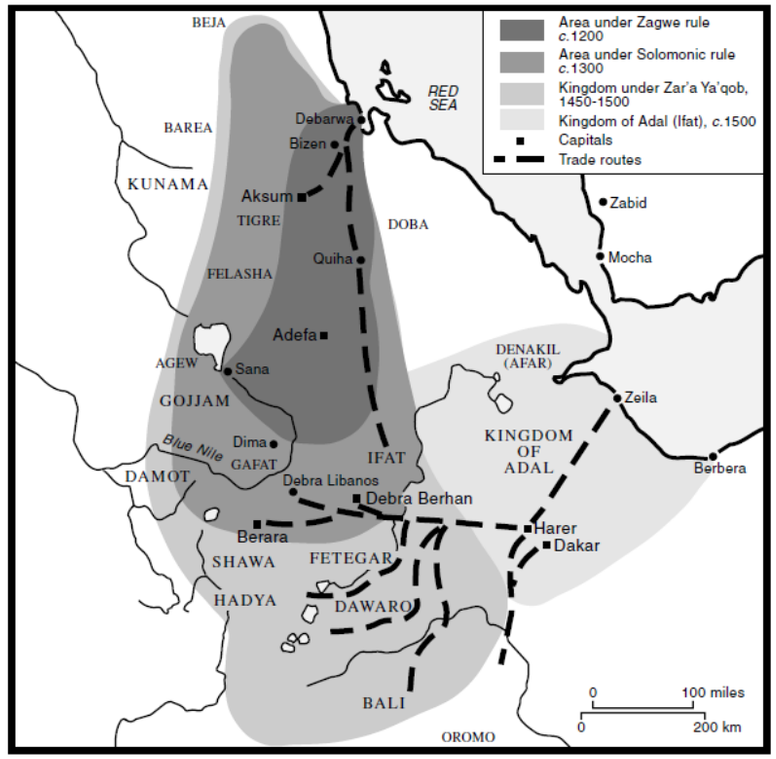

Figure 2: Kingdom of Abyssinia and Kingdom of Adal: 13th–16th century
Kevin Shillington (Ed.) (2009). Encyclopedia of African History. Vol. I, A-G. Fitzroy Dearborn: London and New York, Page 495. © 2005 Taylor & Francis Group.

The "restored" Solomonic Kingdom and these Sultanates of *Makhzumite* and *Walasma* Dynasties were engaged in monotonous raids and counter raids into one another's territories for several centuries. However, neither of them could end the insipidly continued raid and the counter raid. The regular raids were motivated by political struggle for the goal of unabated expansion under the banner of religion in which both the Muslins Sultanates and the Christian kingdom strived for territorial expansion and conquest, rather than a mare inter-religious fighting. The first known expansion of the Abyssinian kingdom to southern Ethiopia under *Atse* Amde Tsion I from 1314-1344 (Braukæmper 2012, Appendix I) would, however, change the situation.

The kingdom of Abyssinia defeated the sultanate of Ifat in 1340. *Atse* Amde Tsion defeated the army of Sultan Suredin (d. 1332). Shortly after this defeat, the religious leader of the Ifat, *Qadi* Selehi, organized a large army led by 2722 commanders from the seventeen districts under his control. Nevertheless, he was defeated. Historian Dr. Lapiso G. Delebo narrates the effect of the loss (Delebo, 1982 Eth. C., p. 107-108): The defeat resulted in the mass destruction and burning of Muslim cities, mosques, farms, and villages; the 12, 048 mosques which were operational before the war were robed; the *Aste* had it recorded in his chronicle saying that after the victory he had acquired gold and silver as plenty as the sand of the seas. The Sultanate of Ifat was forced to leave Shewa to the Christian kingdom. It crossed River Awash to the lowlands, reorganized, and strengthened itself there. From there, it continued to mount a sustained challenge on the highland Christina kingdom for a century.

In an attempt to annihilate the Muslim army and establish lasting peace, almost a century later the Abyssinian kingdom under *Atse* Zera Ya'ekob[32] (r. 1434-1468), launched series of attacks mainly on Muslim Sultanates of Ifat (later Adal), Hadiyya, Fatagar, Dawaro, and Bali on its southern and eastern borders as a continuation of a campaign that had been started at the turn of the second millennium (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 55). Because of their unity, leadership, and effective organization, the Christians had supremacy in most of the raids. As a result, except for the coastal sultanate of Adal[33], other sultanates had at least temporarily acknowledged the suzerainty of the Abyssinian kings. However, none of them has ever been defeated. They instead moved further south transferring the pressure from the Abyssinian kingdom on them to the Oromo. This pressure, coupled with the momentary expansion of the Somali and other peoples and the protracted expedition from the Kingdom of Abyssinia, would soon trigger the biggest and the most organized offensive defense of the Oromo.

Nevertheless, *Atse* Zera Ya'ekob succeeded in defeating Ifat decisively. The inhabitants of Ifat were forced to move south into the border regions of

Djibouti and Somalia. The descendants of its Walasma Dynasty established a new state in these regions—the kingdom of Adal.

Adal was by far the biggest of all sultanates and around the time it engaged the Abyssinian Kingdom in the Jihad war in the 1520s; it was larger than its opponent, the Christian Kingdom, was. Its territory included part of Djibouti and most of north-eastern Somalia from outside of the present Ethiopian Federation, the highland areas of Harar presently divided among Somali, Afar, and Oromia states. Its capital, Dakar, was located southeast of Harar near Fugnanbira (an Oromo expression meaning "near to the nose"). It was a multinational and multi-cultural state. Even though Afar and Somali ethnic groups dominated the state, Semitic Argoba and Harari ethnic groups controlled the leaderships (Begashaw, 2009). Geographically, it was larger than the Christian Abyssinian kingdom. The Kingdom of Abyssinia was a little less than the present Amhara and Tigray states combined.

Atse Zera Ya'ekob (r. 1434-1468), also known as Constantine I, one of the most influential Abyssinian kings, introduced radical religious reforms to cleanse his kingdom from non-Christians. Among others he ordered his people to wear emulates with the inscription of his version of Christian faith; he introduced and institutionalized an inquisition system; he prescribed faith books containing doctrines, laws, and customs of the church for the faithful; he ordered the church to celebrate Sabbath (Saturday) in the same way it celebrates Sunday; and he brutally suppressed a reformation movement in the church known as *Deqiqe Estifanos* or *Estifanosaweyan* (the sons/followers of Stephan) who, contrary to the church tradition, ardently refused to bow to anyone and anything (including the king, Virgin Marry, the saints and the martyrs, and the Cross) except God (Jones & Monroe, 1935, pp. 53-58).

The continued attacks on neighboring Muslim Sultanates (partly including Oromo) and non-Christian Oromo who were affected partly by the southern expansion (see Figure 2)of the Kingdom prompted an organized resistance towards the expansion of the Christian Kingdom. The Oromo, after reforming the Gadaa System [34] in 1445 CE and called the place of the *Gadaa* assembly *Madda Walaabuu* (source of freedom) (Dehu, 2012), started to offensively defend themselves from the territorial expansion and religious pressure from the Abyssinian kingdom.

The resistance from the Muslim Sultanates and the Oromo nation (and other nations) would gradually develop into a national uprising against the Abyssinian kingdom. The successive kings of the Christian kingdom *Atse* Ba'eda Mariam I (r. 1468-1478), *Atse* Constantine II (r. 1478-1484), *Atse* Amde Tseyon II (r. 1484-1494), and *Atse* Naod (r. 1494-1508)) however continued the policy of expansion and dominance.

In Search of Allies against Islam: Abyssinia's First Diplomatic Contacts with Europe

After the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the kingdom of Aksum disconnected from the Mediterranean world. Despite the theological differences of the Eastern Orthodox and *Monophysite* church doctrine of the Byzantine and Aksum, according to (Dumett, 2009, the "emperors of the House of Justin always viewed Aksum as a brother Christian kingdom and ally" (p. 196). Following the decline and fall of the Byzantine Empire, the connection was lost, and many centuries of isolation followed. There existed no Christian brotherhood between the Abyssinian Coptic Church and the western European Catholic Church.

The many centuries of isolation of the Abyssinian Church from the European Christian church, particularly the Catholic Church, saw the beginning of the end of the isolation of the Abyssinian church when Christian Europe discovered the country of *Prester John* and established contact with it. The interest and the curiosity of the Europeans about the country of Prester John was triggered following the publication of a letter[35] around 1165 purported to have been sent from a priest-king, Prester John, of mysterious Christain kingdom in the east to Emperor Manuel Comnenus. The main interest was to have unity with the kingdom of Prester John to rally against the Muslims. However, their many years of exploration in Asia could find neither Prester John nor his splendid kingdom. European travelers, based on the information about the Kingdom Abyssinia from Egypt and Arabia, finally identified the king of Abyssinia with Prester John. This matched with Pope Alexander III's address, "John, the illustrious and magnificent king of the Indians" in his letter in 1177 (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 61). Furthermore, Portuguese explorers reported a great Christian king who ruled somewhere far in the interior of East Africa (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 62). This galvanized the identification of the kingdom of Prester John. In 1298, Marco Polo, the famous Venetian explorer, after visited Africa and Abyssinia,[36] informed Europe about the Christian ruler of Abyssinia (Pankhurst, 2010). In 1427, emissaries from the priest-king (Prester John) reached the king of Aragon. As a result, by the middle of the 15th century, the kingdom of Prester John had been associated with Abyssinia very definitely.

However, it was Prince Henry the Navigator (son of King John of Portugal) who vaguely knew where Abyssinia was, that established the first contact with Abyssinia through the hostile Nile valley before 1446 (Thomas, 1938). Decades later, in 1497, the discovery of sea root to India through the Cape of Good Hope made such efforts less important. Yet, in the second half of the 15th

century, the king of Portugal was interested to know more about the Kingdom of Prester John (Budge, 1928).

The Abyssinian kingdom also wanted to ally with Christendom by establishing diplomatic relations with Europe. It saw such an alliance as a strategic survival tactic because the Horn of Africa was increasingly falling under the influence of Islam. To this effect, the Christian kingdom tried to have a goodwill relationship with Spain and Portugal. The kingdom first wished to establish an alliance with Spain. *Atse* Wedem Ar'ad (1297-1312) had sent a large embassy of thirty men to "the King of the Spains", with an offer of help against the infidels (Pankhurst, 2010), including Muslims. There is however no account of any positive response on this. About a century later, *Atse* Yishaq (r. 1414-1429), in his letter to Pope Clemens VIII in 1428, had indicated that he was ready to acknowledge Catholicism provided that the Pope would send him more missionaries (Bartnicki & Mantel-Niećko, 2003 Eth. C.). He also sought an alliance through inter-dynastic marriage with Alfonso, the king of Aragon (Pankhurst, 1993). Also, he requested military support and artisans. The proposal was aimed at establishing a commitment to free Red Sea ports from the Turks and share Mitsewa and Arkio ports between Spain and his empire (Bartnicki & Mantel-Niećko, 2003 Eth. C.). These efforts, unfortunately, produced no immediately desired effect for the Abyssinian kingdom and the threat from the expanding Islam remained.

In the late 15th century, an opportunity came around for the waning enthusiasm of the Abyssinian Kingdom to establish a diplomatic connection with Christian Portugal. In 1487,[37] King John II of Portugal sent an expedition led by Bartholomew Diaz to reach the Christian Kingdom by sea and an envoy led by De Covilham through the Levant by land to reach Abissynia (Jones & Monroe, 1935). Both had a goal of establishing a diplomatic connection that would establish an alliance between Portugal and the Christian kingdom of Prester John against the Muslim power in the Horn of Africa.

De Covilham succeeded in entering Abyssinia after wandering for many years as far as India. He reached the court of the king in 1494 (Thomas, 1938). He was however not allowed to return. He lived in Abyssinia for several decades. He had been at Abyssinian court when Alvarez visited the court, in 1520, thirty years later (Jones & Monroe, 1935; Thomas, 1938). Two other envoys, who were sent by Albuquerque, governor of the Indies who unsuccessfully tried to attacked Aden in 1513 according to Thomas (1938) also could not return. Besides, according to Jones & Monroe (1935) and Élisée Reclus (1892), the Portuguese Pedro Covillao who was accompanied by the Venetian painter, Nicholas Bracaleone,[38] who arrived in Abyssinia in 1487 were also never allowed to leave the country.

In response to the interest from Portugal and hoping that the two kingdoms would establish an alliance, the Abyssinian Kingdom--being under pressure from expanding Muslim sultanates in south and southeast of the kingdom--sent its first envoy to Europe through Portugal. The action was prompted by the defeat and death of *Atse* Na'od while he was campaigning against the Muslims (Huntingford, 1989) who were expanding across the Awash River and threatening to occupy the highland. Queen Eleni Muhammad,[39] an elderly, able, experienced, and wise woman, sent one Matthew (an Armenian) as an ambassador of Abyssinia (together with a letter and a kingly gift) to King Manuel I of Portugal (Pankhurst, 1993; Thomas, 1938) and to the Pope in Rome through the Indies in 1509[40]. She was seeking to establish a strategic alliance to stop the growing influence of the Ottomans in the region. A powerful woman of her time, the queen had sensed the danger of expanding Islam and was very keen to establish a diplomatic connection with Christian Europe to halt the expansion[41].

The Abyssinian envoy, after series of challenges, succeeded in reaching the Indies and then Portugal. Henry Thomas summarized the details of the travel in the introduction to *The Discovery of Abyssinia by the Portuguese in 1520*. According to Thomas (1938, pp. xii-xiii), Matthew traveled from Mtsiwa port to the Indian base of the Portuguese at Goa. On his way, he was detained at Dabhol[42], south of Bombay, and the presents to King Manuel were taken from him in 1510. However, the powerful Portuguese governor, Albuquerque came to his rescue, he was freed, and the presents were restored. Nevertheless, the Portuguese could not fully trust the authenticity of his credentials thinking that he may be an imposter. Nevertheless, Albuquerque received him well and sent him to Portugal aboard a fleet that left Goa in 1513. The suspicion however continued aboard the sheep and he was "ill-treated." After arriving in Lisbon in 1514, however, King Manuel received him ceremoniously. Matthew delivered the letter from Eleni and the special present-little cross that was said to have been made from the "wood of the true cross."[43] In the letter, Eleni showed great enthusiasm for potential cooperation and offered more than what she could offer. In usual Abyssinian immoderate expression and grandiloquent tone, she wrote:

> We can supply mountain of provision and men like unto the sand of the sea... We have news that the Lord of Cairo is building ships to fight your fleet, and we shall give you so many men... as to wipe the Moors from the face of the earth. We, by land, and you, brothers, by the sea. (Eleni quoted in Cohen, 2009, p. 16)

Nevertheless, while in Lisbon, Matthew was once again suspected of genuinely of an embassy. Though he had spent many years at the Abyssinian court and is related to the royal family through marriage, his being an Armenian

by color and birth could not convince the Portuguese that he represented the Kingdom from whence he claimed he had been sent. His embassy was now and then doubted for a decade; and the Portuguese trusted him fully only after he had helped them finally "discover" Prester John (then *Atse* Lebne Dengel, also known as David II) in 1521.

In the meantime, the kingdom continued expanding Christianity to Damot in the southwest on one hand and resisting the expansion of Islam in the southeast on the other. In the 15th and early 16th centuries, the present East and West Gojjam provinces were being converted to Christianity (Pankhurst, 2009, p. 53) and settled by the Lasta people (Tafla, 1987). The Lasta people were mainly Christian and Amara. The expansion and the conversion were based on the foundational works done in the earlier century. The works of St. Tekle Haimanot had a significant effect on the massive conversion. Historical records show that massive southward and westward expansion of Christianity and the Abyssinian Kingdom took place during the reign of *Atse* Zera Ya'ekob (r. 1434-1468). The establishment of satellite missions, installation of hundreds of new churches, reform of the Church, and flourishing of art and literature were attributed to the reign of Zera Ya'ekob. This was the foundation for further expansion of both Christianity and the Abyssinian kingdom. It would pave the way for both strong reactions from non-Abyssinians and non-Christians and for the extraordinary claims of Abyssinia on the territories outside of its kingdom in the next centuries.

The westward expansion of the kingdom and Christianity to Damot in the 15th and 16th centuries (see Figure 2) was remarked with new settlements of the Abyssinian people in the southwest of their kingdom. Indeed, the earliest campaign of the Abyssinian kingdom in Gojjam and Damot started during the reign of *Atse* Amde Tsion. In 1314 (Eth. C), Amde Tsion campaigned against the kingdoms of Damot and Gojjam (Kemiso & Handamo, 2002 Eth. C., p. 24). Winning the resistance and resettling the territory with Amara, however, took two centuries. According to the oral tradition of the area, the town of Bure in Damot, for example, was the "seat of the first settlers from Lasta sometime in [the] sixteenth century" (Tafla, 1987, p. 915). It was cleared for settlement during the reign of Gelawdewos (r. 1540-1559) by Warase, the chief of Wag (Tafla, 1987, p. 986).

The eastward expansion of the kingdom to the sultanate of Adal in the eastern lowlands was however met with challenges from the Islamic sultanates. Initially, in 1516, under the leadership of *Atse* Libne Dengel, the Christian kingdom succeeded in defeating the governor of Zeyla, Mahfuz, who led the Adal army against the Christian highlanders. Nevertheless, the prospect of successfully defending the kingdom and further expanding Christianity seemed gloomy because the same year the Ottoman Sultan Selim conquered Egypt and

received the submission of the Hejaz creating a profound change in the political situation on the Red Sea (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 81).

This would worry the Christian Kingdom; allying with other great Christian nations of Europe would be a key to the survival of the isolated kingdom in the region of ever-encroaching Islamic powers. In the first two decades of the 16th century, the Ottoman Turks had consolidated control over the Red Sea coastal areas and the eastern African shores. They had already been a problem to the trade route between south-western Europe and India, where the Portuguese had a stronghold and the interest to maintain it. However, the threats from the Turks were already felt very well. The southward expansion of Egypt under Selim was also noticed. Portugal appeared to be a promising ally to the kingdom because the two saw control of the Red Sea by Muslims as a common challenge and the expansion of Islam as a threat. Now was the time when Portugal wanted to establish diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Abyssinia. The Abyssinian Kingdom had long wished a Christian kingdom would control the Red Sea than a Muslim one.

At this critical time, the diplomatic relation between Portugal and Abyssinia started in 1520. The first regular Portuguese embassy, dispatched in February 1520 by the governor of the Indies, landed at Arkiko, near Metsewa, and reached the Abyssinian court inland the same year. The embassy included, among others, Fransisco Alvares, the priest, Rodrigo de Lima, the ambassador of the "Governor of the parts of India", Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, who had already concluded a treaty of alliance with *Baher-negash* of King of Abyssinia at the port of arrival, and Don Jorge d'Abreu (Thomas, 1938). Mathew, the Abyssinian ambassador, also traveled with them inland up to the camp of the Abyssinian king.

In the formal talks, *Atse* Lebne Dengel drove much interest in the variations between Roman Catholicism and his Orthodox faith than on the politics of alliance of defense against Islam. Finally, an agreement was reach and a formal trilingual (Amharic, Arabic, and Portuguese) letter was written to Manuel of Portugal. Abyssinia agreed to cede the port of Mitsewa to serve as a naval base to the Portuguese and asked for masons, carpenters, goldsmiths, armorers, and doctors (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 78).

The report of the Governor of India on the conclusion of the agreement reached Lisbon on 30 April 1521(Thomas, 1938, p. xiv). This was the first formal conclusion of an agreement of alliance between an African Christian kingdom and its European counterpart against a common "enemy"- the Muslims. The announcement of the news of the discovery of Prester John, the stories of arrival and initial contacts between the Portuguese and the Abyssinia were published in Lisbon immediately. In the publication, the author, in its introduction enthusiastically wished for "the increase of His [king Manuel's]

holy faith and the destruction of the evil sect of Mohamet, in those parts and all others" (Thomas, 1938, p. 63).

The Portuguese embassy stayed in Abyssinia for five years. The embassy met De Covilham, its predecessor who had come to Abyssinia three decades earlier and had not been allowed to leave the kingdom (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 62; Thomas, 1938, p. x) in 1520. However, the new embassy was allowed finally to leave. On 28 April 1526, it sailed from Mitsewa with presents and a letter from *Atse* Lebne Dengle to King Manuel of Portugal (Russell, 1985, p. 132). Upon his return, the chaplain of the embassy, Francisco Alvarez, subsequently published the first complete account of the Kingdom and description of the country. It however neither interested other European to contact the Abyssinian Kingdom nor motivated the Portuguese to come back soon with the needed help of the kingdom.

The Christian-Muslim War (1527-1543)

Before the 13th century, the frontiers of the Abyssinian kingdom were attacked repeatedly over many years in resistance to its territorial expansion and new population settlements. Pastoral communities, especially the southern Oromo had attacked the expanding kingdom along the borders. The powerful and well-organized army of the kingdom (Marcus, 1994, p.31) brutalized most of the attackers.

Due to their mode of pastoral life and culture of excessive patience, good temper, and liberal accommodation shaped by the Oromo principles of *Qixxee*, *Safuu*[44], and *Aadaa*, the Oromo could not mount an effective resistance and attack, as they would do two centuries later when they realized these humane values were continuously misused against them. Also, the decentralization and weakening of from 750-1116 CE (Alemayehu *et al.* 2004, cited in Sirna, 2012, p. 52) diminished the military organization and defenses of the Oromo. This had allowed the Muslim Sultanates and the Abyssinian kingdom not only to take the country of the Oromo bit by bit but also to make their wars on the unoccupied Oromo lands.

Other relatively strong southern nations had already been fallen into the Abyssinian political strategy of royal intermarriage[45] with other non-Abyssinian kingdoms. The kingdom of Hadiyya, for example, yielded to the Abyssinian influence due to such marriage. The Abyssinian kings and *Atses* always sought to marry the daughters of the southern kings so that they would be able to subdue the latter strategically. In some cases, they were successful. As a result, no strong organized armed resistances were matching the Abyssinian army before the 14th century.

From the 13th to 16th centuries, overpopulation and overgrazing among the Somali and Afar finally led to population movement that took the Oromo "in the Awsa-Awash plains and in the Chercher-Harer uplands" with the surprise of "people living far to the east and close to the coast" now settling among them (Marcus, 1994, pp. 31-32). The pressure from the east, together with the continued pressure from the Abyssinian kingdom from the north, prompted the Oromo to reform their Gadaa System in 1445 at *Madda Walaabuu (source of freedom)* primary for effective military defense and offensive attacks. The *Gadaa* Assembly may have made the law that required the Oromo to make *Butta*[46], an offensive campaign every eight years to reclaim the country that had been taken away from them by both the Abyssinian kingdom and the Islamic Sultanates at *Madda Walaabuu*. The other main reform was on the protection of itself from the influence of Islam and Christianity. In this regard, a law that required every leader of an Oromo clan to make *Muudaa pilgrimage* to Borana to strengthen the Oromo religion – *Waaqeffannaa* – so that the Oromo world view would remain pure and the Oromo remain united spared from the division the "new" religions would instill among them. After the reform, the Oromo were prepared for protracted offensive defense until they would reclaim all or most of the land that they had lost. Their first offensive defense was launched in 1522 during *Gadaa Malbaa* (1522-1530).

However, soon an able leader of the Adal kingdom emerged to unite the Adal, the Somali, and eastern Oromo of Harar. He was Ahmad *Ibn Ibrahim el-Ghazi* (1506-1543). He is better known and more affectionately called *Ahmad Gragn* in Amharic and *Ahmed Gure* in the Somali language. Both mean Ahmad the left-handed. He was "raised by his devout kin in *Jeldesa*[47], one of the major oases along the trading route to Zeila" (Marcus, 1994, p.32), in the eastern part of present Oromia State.

When in 1526 Ahmed Gure (*Gragn*) succeeded as the leader of the kingdom of Adal, who had been keenly observing the Abyssino-Portugal strategic maneuvers, he united the Muslim sultanates against the Abyssinian kingdom and made successful raids along the border. Motivated by his gains, he refused to pay tribute that was imposed on the sultanate by the Abyssinian kingdom following its defeat in 1516. In response, the Abyssinian kingdom launched a "Solomonic invasion" in 1527 (Marcus, 1994). Ahmad *Gragn* successfully defended his kingdom proving that the Abyssinian army can be stopped, and even defeated. The next year, he declared Jihad on the Christian kingdom after organizing a humble-sized but highly motivated army.

The revenge attack was quick but unsuccessful. The infuriated Abyssinian *Atse* organized its largest force ever from Tigray, Amhara, the Agew, Begemder, Gojjam, and Shewa. He shortly organized an army of over two hundred thousand men strong. The two forces decided to meet in 1529 on the

plains of Shimbra Kure, between present-day Addis Ababa city and Adama city. In the fierce battle, the small army of Ahmad *Gragn* fought gallantly. "The Abyssinian armies broke and fled like chaff before the wind" (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 82). A little more than 20,000 men of Ahmed Gragn defeated the 216,000 men strong army of Lebne Dengel. Ahmed *Gragn* emerged victorious from the decisive religious battle ever to be fought on the continent.

In the following decade, the Muslim army overrun the kingdom. The following year *Ahmad Gragn* forces occupied Dawaro, Shewa, Amara, and Lasta (Marcus, 1994, p. 32). Three years later, they were campaigning in Tigray. Ten years later, in 1540 when *Atse* Lebne Dengel died, about ninety percent of the kingdom was brought under Muslim rule (Ayanu & Ruffo, 2007; Cohen, 2009, p. 17).

In 1535, *Atse* Lebne Dengel pleaded for help to the Portuguese in distress where he was a fugitive in the Simen Mountains. He sent one John Bermudez, a member of the embassy that had remained in the country from among the embassy that had visited him (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 83). Atsme Giorgis suggests that the content of the letter of Lebne Dengel to the king of Portugal was "somewhat in the following words":

> We too need your help. The Muslims have driven us out of our country and have denied us a place to stay in. We accept your faith; we shall also give a portion of the country if you wish; we shall obey the pope of Rome. (Tafla, 1987, p. 603)

Though the Portuguese king decided to send a relieving force from India, it was too late to save the kingdom and its king. *Atse* Lebne Dengel died in 1540 before he had heard from Portugal. His young son, Gelawdewos, under the regency of his mother, succeeded him. According to Atsme Giorgis, Gelawdewos wrote another letter in the name of the kingdom appealing for help. Hearing the news of the arrival of Cristóvão da Gama at Mitsewa, he wrote saying: "We shall submit to the Roman Church. We shall give one-third of the kingdom. Please help us" (Tafla, 1987, p. 605). The letter was delivered by *Etege* Seble Wengel to Bahr Negash Yesehaq at Debrewa.

The Portuguese arrived in January 1541 from Goa, India, and rescued the Abyssinian kingdom. They were 400 strong musketeers and some helpers. Cristóvão da Gama (1516-1542), son of the famous Vasco da Gama, was the leader of the Portuguese. In the meantime, the Ottoman authorities provided to Ahmad *Gragn* nine hundred musketeers and ten cannons in solidarity (Jones & Monroe, 1935; Tafla, 1987). The religious proxy war between the Christian Catholic and Muslim Ottoman started in Africa.

In 1542 CE, the Portuguese crusaders fought one of their decisive battles against Imam Ahmad's army. Two hundred of them were killed and their commander, Christopher da Gama, was captured. He was humiliated and

finally beheaded. Ahmad *Gragn* himself was lightly wounded. The victory was inconclusive for both sides. However, on 25 February 1543 CE, at the b*attle of Wayna Dega near Lake Tana,* the remaining Portuguese troops together with the additional 200 that newly arrived and led to Simen by Seble Wengel (Tafla, 1987, p. 609) and Gelawdewos's army combined to defeat the forces of Adal. Ahmad *Gragn*, who had sent back his Turkish auxiliary army after the death of Christopher da Gama, was killed in the battle of Wayna Daga.[48]His army fled, and his kingdom shattered.

Atse Gelawdewos was triumphant; but extremely weakened by the devastation caused by the Muslim army both morally, culturally, and economically. His kingdom was saved for now by the help of Portugal. Reviving it however would take him many years[49]. But the successor of Ahmad *Gragn*, Amir Nur Muhammad who married the widow of Ahmad *Gragn*, Del Wanbara, would kill *Atse* Gelawdewos and rule Harar from 1543-1567 while leading a series of military expeditions against the Oromo and the Abyssinian kingdom (Tafla, 1987, p. 955).

The effect of the Christian-Muslim war on the political history of both Islam and Christianity was immense. The following five effects could be identified readily. First, the brief period of little over a single decade and a half (1527-1543) rule of Abyssinia by the charismatic leader allowed the Christians to experience another rule dissimilar to their hereditary rule. Ahmad *Gragn* "built a civil administration composed of his own men and collaborators, often the remnants of the pre-Solomonic ruling classes" (Marcus, 1994, p. 32). That was new to the Abyssinians who had been ruled by monarchs who claimed a divine mandate and by local chiefs who took governorship as a hereditary right. Second, as Marcus indicated in his preceding assertion, the marginalized remnants of ruling classes from before the "restoration" of the Solomonic dynasty or from the indigenous ancient people, who the Aksumite kingdom had conquered and annexed during its gradual southward expansion, were allowed to reclaim their roots and identity. Third, it highlighted the significance of proxy alliance. The Abyssinians sought help from Christian power in Europe. The Adal sought for helping hand from a Muslim Ottoman empire. The two aiding powers had their power struggle for dominance on the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The nature of the conflict was mainly religious but also power struggle happening only internally in the Horn of Africa region between the Christian and Muslim armies stationed on the two sides of the Great East African Rift valley. It was not a religious war from the point of view of the motivation for the support of the Portuguese and the Ottoman Turks. The support of the Portuguese and the Ottoman Turks for the respective warring parties was motivated by an economic interest in the region than religion. Fourth, it empowered other nations in the region to stand against the powerful

Abyssinian Kingdom. Fifth, it gave a pretext to the Abyssinian Kingdom to further expand and claim new territories.

The Kingdom of Abyssinia and the Oromo Nation

I have dealt with the history of the Oromo nation in East Africa in another book, *New Order in East Africa: The Oromo Nation and Renaissance of True Ethiopia*. I have reproduced summaries of four related chapters from that voluminous work here. Readers are requested kindly to refer to the extensive work for details. Because the decentralized republican Oromo states and monarchies and the Kingdom of Abyssinia were the primary contenders in the region throughout the historical existence of the Kingdom of Abyssinia, and that Oromo nationalism and Abyssinian nationalism have been competing in the same region for many centuries, it is important to give ample account of the relationship between the two. The next sections are summaries of the relevant chapters from the work mentioned above.

Causes of the 16th Century Military Campaigns of the Oromo

During the first half of the second millennium CE, the Oromo nation in East Africa was divided into the northern, south-central, and southwestern groups of Oromo communities. The first groups were becoming absorbed into the emerging kingdom of Abyssinia and the Islamic principalities in the present northeast and central Ethiopia. The second group was independent republicans who had maintained the Gadaa System in the present region of southern Ethiopia and most of Kenya. The third group was on the move and forming Oromo monarchies in the Great African lakes' region.

The division of the Oromo, some suggest, might have been the result of the dissociation of *Gadaa*, *cinnaa Gadaa*. First, the gradual expansion of the kingdom of Aksum, then the expansion of Islam and Christianity, and finally, the gradual expansion of the Abyssinian peoples, both during the Zagwean Dynasty and after the formation of the kingdom of Abyssinia, exerted social, political, and economic pressures on the northern Oromo communities.

By the middle of the second millennium, the accommodation of the alien people by the Oromo, mainly based on their principles of *qixxee* and *wal-dandeettii*, had proved to be injurious to the Oromo. It had led to the absorption of large groups of the *Baarentuu* Oromo into the alien cultures and religions in the present northeast and central Ethiopia. Both Christian and Islamic powers had converted minority Oromo communities in the territories that they had taken from the latter into their respective religions. The accommodating culture of the Oromo, which allowed these to take place had proved to be injurious.

At the same time, the ever-expanding kingdom of Abyssinia continued to expand further south into the republican core of the south-central Oromo by launching numerous military expeditions and colonists. As the kingdom grew increasingly powerful, it continued to launch military expeditions farther into the south-central Oromo territories resulting in the displacement of the Oromo and the establishment of Abyssinian military colonies in present south-central Ethiopia. Furthermore, the feudal social organization and the absolute monarchy political system of the kingdom of Abyssinia came into direct collision with the egalitarian and democratic socio-political system and republican government of the Oromo. The discordancy between the two systems of social organization and forms of governments became an existential threat to the remainder of the Oromo who were free, sovereign, and less affected by a Christian power. This expansion, together with the expansions of some of the Islamic principalities and some of the Somali clans in the east, had resulted in the displacement of the Oromo in present central Ethiopia.

Because of the continued expansion of the Christian and Islamic powers into their territories, the fundamental values that define the Oromo identity, including their republican Gadaa System and *Waaqeffannaa* religion, were under increasing attack by the mid-15th century. This might have encouraged the south-central Oromo, mainly the *Booranaa* Oromo, to reform their Gadaa System in 1445 at *Madda Walaabuu* (source of liberty) for their strategic defense, and to reclaim their lost territories. The reform was the result of the realization both by the south-central and

northeastern Oromo communities that the accommodative principles of *qixxee* and *wal-dandeettii* of the Oromo cannot be a valid model or relationship anymore. Besides, the Oromo must reform their Gadaa System in such a way that they could build effective organized resistance to the aggressive expansion of the Christian and Muslim power around them. The south-central Oromo reformed their Gadaa System at *Madda Walaabuu* in the mid-15th century but it would become an effective resistance only half a century later. The former would pioneer the Gadaa-based offensive-defensive campaign; the latter would soon join them and take it much farther north.

In the early decades of the 16th century, the south-central Oromo launched the highly organized Gadaa–based, offensive-defensive military campaigns—*duula galaa*— against both the Christian Abyssinian kingdom in the north and the Islamic Sultanate of Adal and the Somali clans in the east. By then, the Gadaa System had achieved an extraordinary level of military recruitment and organization that would be able not only to check the expansion of the enemies but also to reclaim vast lost territories from them amid both the south-central *Booranaa* and northeastern *Baarentuu* Oromo. *Duula galaa* was the reaction of the Oromo to the many centuries-long expansion of the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia, Muslim principalities, including the Sultanate of Adal, the Islamized Somali peoples, and some Omotic peoples into the then heartlands of the Oromo in modern south-central Ethiopia. First the Christian kingdom of Aksum, then the Zagwean, and finally the kingdom of Abyssinia had continually expanded south and had continually displacing or absorbing the Oromo into their dominion. Similarly, the Muslim principalities that mushroomed in the eastern and central regions of modern Ethiopia had expanded along the trade routes.

In general, several factors might have caused the 16th-century *duula galaa*, the reactionary response of the Oromo. These include:

1. the continued expansion of Christian and Muslim powers into the Oromo territories and dispossession of the Oromo ancestral land by these powers,

2. the continued absorption of the north-eastern Oromo into Christian and Islamic cultures,

3. the aggressive expansion of the kingdom of Abyssinia and Sultanate of Adal and their encroaching military colonies into the territories of south-central Oromo,

4. the existential threat to the Oromo way of life and government from the kingdom of Abyssinia.

In other words, the Gadaa-based protracted offensive-defensive campaigns of the Oromo in the present central territories of Ethiopia during the 16th century were the consequential and direct result of the centuries-long expansion of the Christian and the Muslim powers into the Oromo territories. The continued expansion of the two powers had affected adversely the way of life, culture, religion, and the Gadaa System of the Oromo to the point where they could not tolerate it anymore. *Duula galaa* (campaign of the returnees) was a just military campaign of the Oromo for a threefold purpose: to return to the territories that they had lost to the expanding Christian and Muslim powers, to reunite with the Oromo who had been absorbed either to the Christian or Muslim culture and dominion and to defend and restore Oromo identity. The Oromo would succeed to reclaim a significant part of their ancestral territories in modern Ethiopia through their *Walabummaa campaign*. (Demmeksa, 2018a, pp. 269-271)

Liberation and Resettlement

The early 16th century was the beginning of the formidable liberation struggle of the Oromo in modern south-central Ethiopia. Some of the northern Oromo communities had resisted the expansion of both the Christian and Muslim powers before the turn of the 16th century while others had joined either side. However, their defenses were not well organized and hence had had a negligible effect. Even though most of the Abyssinian records indicate that the Gadaa-based offensive-defensive military campaigns of the Oromo started after the invasion of Ahmed Gragn, they might have started during the Gadaa of the fathers of *Gadaa Jibbenaa* (1450-1458). This is because, first, Abba

Bahrey has recorded that this Gadaa existed, second, Gadaa System was reformed during this Gadaa, and third, it is highly probable that the rhythmic Gadaa-based defense of the Oromo that Bahrey recorded has had a long history, going back at least to the reformation, where the latter Gadaas continued the tradition. Nonetheless, it certainly started before the breakout of the religious war between Adal and Abyssinia (Jalata, 2012, p. 132; Hassen, 1990, p. 18) or "immediately before or just at the time of the first incursions of Imam Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim" (Pankhurst, 1997, p. 281).

The south-central Oromo, who elicited the Gadaa-based offensive-defensive campaign of the Oromo, had clear goals of reclaiming their ancestral Father Land, defending and maintaining their *nagaa* (holistic peace) and *birmaduu* (liberty/sovereignty), restoring their *bilisummaa* (freedom) and *kaawoo* ("Oromo Dream"), and to achieve the height of f*innaa*[50](development). Each of the goals had elaborate specific strategies and tactics. Starting their Gadaa–based offensive-defensive campaign from present central Ethiopia in the 1520s, a century later, in the 1620s, the Oromo reclaimed larger parts of the present territories of Ethiopia. They had attacked everywhere in Abyssinia Proper, except Tigre. That included all the present Amhara State. Also, they had reclaimed some territories from the kingdom of Adal, save the walled city of Harar, and most of the kingdom of Awsa, which has become mostly Afar State. With their success over the kingdom of Adal and Awsa, they also reclaimed territories from the Somali peoples. In central Ethiopia, they had reclaimed territories from Hadiya and Sidama peoples. Moreover, they had begun expanding into the region that has now become western Oromia. They achieved this monumental success during the successive Gadaas of the fathers (*Malbaa, Muudanaa, Kiilolee, Biifolee,* and *Michillee*) and the Gadaas of the sons (*Harmuufaa, Roobalee, Birmajii, Mul'ataa,* and *Duuloo*) during 1522-1562 and 1562-1602, respectively.

The transition from the Gadaas of the "fathers" to the Gadaas of "sons" in the 1560s witnessed:

(a) Restoration of ancient Gadaa centers in central Ethiopia

(b) Reunion of the northeastern and south-central Oromo

(c) The beginning of the integration of other peoples with Oromo

(d) The beginning of the formation of Oromo Confederacies.

Around the transition time between the Gadaas of the fathers and the Gadaas of the sons, the Oromo were able to re-establish their ancient Gadaa centers (religo-political centers) in the reclaimed territories in the present central Oromia (Central Ethiopia). The most notable of these restored *odaa*, Gadaa centers, was *Odaa Nabee* near Addis Ababa/Finfinnee, the capital city of Oromia State and the federal government of Ethiopia. In addition, the south-central *Booranaa* and the northeast *Baarentuu* Oromo were reunited in central Oromia during this time. Jointly, they formed a formidable force against the kingdom of Abyssinia and soon overrun the retreating kingdom. In addition to this reunion, the Oromo also began the ethnographical transformation of exceedingly minority peoples in central Ethiopia to Oromo through the institution of *moggaasaa*. The defeated or submitted peoples, *gabbaroo*, began to gradually share the Oromo identity and began the process of becoming part of the Oromo polity. This time was also the beginning of the decentralization of the one Gadaa government in to regional and local (Clan) Gadaa governments. The rapid geographical expansion of the Oromo encouraged decentralization, but the formation of Oromo confederacies made the decentralization possible. Oromo confederacies were decentralized Gadaa government of the Oromo where the central government ceded most of its powers to the regional governments but maintained some control over them through the mechanism of the Gadaa Constitution.

After ten Gadaa cycles, however, some of the northern Oromo groups had joined the kingdom of Abyssinia under the leadership of *Atse* Susenyos (r. 1607–1632), who was an adopted Oromo and perceived by some Oromo communities as their Gadaa leader. This might have divided and weakened the Oromo and resulted in the loss of momentum of the Gadaa–based campaigns

of the Oromo. Throughout the 17th century, unfriendly Oromo communities continued their resistance against the kingdom of Abyssinia. They would score sporadic victories against Abyssinian *Atses*. These Oromo communities would help maintain the territories that the Oromo of the 16th century had reclaimed from the kingdom of Abyssinia. On the other hand, starting from the beginning of the 17th century some Oromo communities, mostly the northern *Yajjuu, Walloo, Raayyaa* and *Asaboo,* and some groups of the central and south-western *Tuulamaa* and *Maccaa* Oromo, started to ally themselves and integrate with the Abyssinian kingdom. Through their political and cultural integration, as shall be discussed later, these northern Oromo communities would ultimately become the masters of the Abyssinian kingdom and would rule it both directly and indirectly for almost a century. This, however, would cost the rest of the Oromo dearly: first, more and more Oromo would continue to assimilate to Abyssinian identity; second, the unity of the Oromo would continue to be elusive until in the late 19th century, when the Abyssinians would use this opportunity to subjugate the Oromo.

The Oromo of the successive Gadaa *Malbaa, Muudanaa, Kiilolee, Biifolee, Michillee Harmuufaa, Roobalee, Birmajii, Mul'ataa,* and *Duuloo* achieved monumental successes in the 16th century. Those two generations rebuilt greater *Biyya Oromoo*, greater than the present Oromia. They defeated might Christian and Muslim armies in battle after battle for over eight decades and gradually but surely restored both the dignity of the Oromo and their ancestral territories. With their traditional but democratic and egalitarian organization and their traditional but voluntary and self-motivated warriors, they were able to defeat highly organized massive medieval armies of the kingdom of Abyssinia and obliterate the Sultanate of Adal (the kingdom of Adal and Awsa). History of their enemy has preserved their determination, heroism, and impressive successes.

The present generations of Oromo, who are sloppily beholding the poaching of Oromia from almost all sides, are highly indebted to their ancestors. Their forefathers fought the expanding adversary powers heroically, defeated the enemy multiple times

> for several decades, reclaimed the vast territory from the opponent, and passed it on to the next generation with restored *Kaawoo*. *Kaawoo* represents "freedom, peace, prosperity, success, and happiness" (Jalata, 2005, p. 32) or simply, "prosperity and peace" (Jalata & Schaffer, 2013, p. 294)) of the Oromo nation. If the present generation should learn any important lesson from the 16th-century generation, it must be by asking one question: 'Why were the Oromo of the 16th century so successful?' (Demmeksa, 2018a, pp. 269-271)

Reasons for the Success of the Oromo

> By the end of the 16th century, the Oromo had reclaimed most of Abyssinia Proper but Tigre in the north and most of the Sultanate of Adal but the walled city of Harar in the east after neutralizing both the Christian and the Muslim powers in the region that has now become central modern Ethiopia. They achieved this monumental success in just a little more than half of a century and by successively defeating the most organized and the most advanced forces of the kingdom of Abyssinia and Sultanate of Adal.

This has left every interested person wonder: how the Oromo, who had neither a king nor a master nor a standing army, were able to achieve such height of success. Abba Bahrey has attempted to make advisory sociological analysis for his king. He primarily proposed that the Oromo were successful because, unlike the Abyssinians where only a tenth of able men fight, all able men of the Oromo were warriors. The real reason for the successes of the Gadaa-based offensive-defensive military campaigns of the Oromo in the 16th century, however, cannot be found in Abba Bahrey's analysis. Nonetheless, his analysis, though contradictory in part to his own records, is important in illustrating aspects of the real reasons.

Based on the information in the record of Bahrey, other related Abyssinian records, the structure of the Oromo society, the organization, institution, and continued practices of the Gadaa System, and Oromo oral literature, the real reasons may readily be identified.

Accordingly, the real reasons include:

(1) Gadaa System, (Oromo democracy)
(2) Age-set institutions and cibra regiments
(3) Guerrilla warfare (*gaaduu*)
(4) The goal to reclaim lost territories (*galma*)
(5) The determination to regain their *kaawoo* (Oromo Dream)
(6) Innovative military provision (*galaa)*
(7) Ethnographic social integration policy (*moggaasaa*)
(8) Dual and parallel social organization (moiety)
(9) Extrapolated clan structure (*gosa*)
(10) Decentralization and alliance building (confederation)
(11) Oromo monotheistic religion (*Waaqeffannaa*)

Each of these served as complementary to one another in making the Oromo victorious against their enemies both militarily, socially, and politically. Thus, the study concludes that the real reason for the military and socio-political successes of the Oromo in the 16th century are to be found not in Abba Bahrey's analysis nor in some latest suggestion but in the combined effects of several Oromo institutions, traditions, social and military innovations, and more importantly the determination of the Oromo people.

However, interested individuals have tried to diminish the successes of the Oromo against the Abyssinian kingdom. More recent suggested reasons other than these or analysis excluding these that have been proposed by some Abyssinians in the form of disconsolate literary retribution have been only attempting to undermine the success of the Oromo. It is impossible to undercut or disregard the successes of the Oromo ancestors of the 16th century who had not only triumphed over their enemies but also succeeded in restoring most of the Oromo Father Land and the *kaawoo* of the nation.

Most of the restored Oromo Father Land has survived in the form of Oromia to date. However, the *kaawoo* of the Oromo has been lost since the conquest of the Oromo of modern Ethiopia by the kingdom of Abyssinia in the late 19th century and the consequent institutionalization of settler colonization in the Oromo country. The Oromo of the present generation is

> indebted to the Oromo of the 16th century. They must also emulate them to restore the glory of both the Oromo nation and their Fatherland. Greater Oromia (Ormania), where the Oromo nation would enjoy true Oromo democracy under the Gadaa government and the *kaawoo* of the Oromo fulfilled should always be the vision of the *sub-boonaa* Oromo. (Demmeksa, 2018a, pp 414-415)

Influence of the Oromo in the Abyssinian Kingdom

> By the 1560s, the Oromo had retaken a third of the Abyssinian kingdom (Bechhaus-Grest, 2005, p. 1182). At the time, the kingdom included a little more than the present Amhara and Tigray States. Just two decades later, in the 1580s, they had attacked all the Abyssinian provinces except Tigre (Tafla, 1987, p. 165). By the beginning of the 17th century, the Oromo had controlled about two-third of present Ethiopia. At the time, most of the Oromo communities remained in the regions that would become Oromia State. These Oromo communities would remain in a mutually defensive *status quo* with the kingdom but continued to govern themselves according to their republican Gadaa System at last during the two centuries that followed.

Some Oromo groups from among northern *Booranaa* (*Maccaa* and *Tuulamaa*) and northern *Baarentuu* (*Walloo*, *Yajjuu*, *Raayyaa*, *Asaboo*, *Ashangee*, *Waajjiraat*), however, decided to join the kingdom under the leadership of *Atse* Susenyos (r. 1607–1632). Susenyos was an adopted Oromo who first appeared to have the intention to unite the Oromo and the Abyssinians but succeeded only in dividing the Oromo by winning some Oromo communities to his camp. These Oromo communities, who decided to follow him, consequently, became politically integrated with the Christian kingdom. Because of their alliance with the enemy, the rest of Oromo estranged them. Nevertheless, because of being Oromo, they always had the backing and support of the rest of the Oromo from the south when threatened.

Even though the state power would remain in the hands of the so-called descendants of King Solomon of Israel, the success of the Gadaa-based offensive-defensive campaigns of the 16th

century would give the Oromo who would willy-nilly join the Abyssinian kingdom an insurmountable political power in the kingdom throughout the 17th century. Nonetheless, even though they had already started to significantly influence the power structure of the kingdom starting during the reign of *Atse* Bakkafa (r. 1721–1730), an Oromo bloodline would ascend to the Abyssinian throne only during the reign of *Atse* Iyoas (r. 1755–1769). This was when the hegemony of the Oromo that would last until 1855 began both in Gondar palace and throughout the kingdom. Following the coming to the political power of the Oromo in the royal capital, increased Oromo moved into Gondar, the capital of the kingdom. Soon, Gondar became an Oromo town "by all intent and purpose" (Budge 1928, p. 461), and the kingdom fell under the influence of the northern Oromo. After a brief civil war in which *Atse* Iyoas was killed, the dynasty of the *Yajjuu* Oromo effectively ruled the kingdom for about a century. This includes the era traditionally known as Zamane *Masafent* (1776–1855). The Oromo governed the kingdom by installing puppet *Atses* on the so-called Solomonic throne. The *Yajjuu* Oromo enthroned many "Solomonic" *Atses* on the Abyssinian throne during *Zamane Masafent*. However, they effectively ruled the kingdom of Abyssinia as did the Abyssinian *Atses* before them, but with more provincial autonomy.

This period of the rule of Abyssinia Proper by the northern Oromo who had become part of the kingdom has been lamented by the Abyssinian political and religious elites as the period of division and weakness of the kingdom. Beyond the apparent reality, they did so not to recognize either the historical influences of the Oromo or the period of the *Yajjuu* Oromo dynasty, aka Zamane *Masafent,* in the history of the kingdom. Almost every Abyssinian record since then reflect this effort: they portray the northern Oromo as strangers even though they had not only been an integral part of the kingdom for several hundreds of years but also had ruled it for many decades.

Nonetheless, the study shows that the historical influence of the minority northern Oromo on the Abyssinian kingdom from the 16th to 19th centuries was prevalent. Owing to inadequate literary tradition, earlier influences of the Oromo on the Abyssinian

kingdom have not been recorded. Since the 16th century, however, the impacts of the Gadaa-based military campaigns of the Oromo on the kingdom have been recorded vividly. The records show that the Oromo had controlled two-third of modern Ethiopia by the beginning of the 17th century. Some Abyssinian records show that, though the Oromo were divided, the minority Oromo who were estranged by the rest of Oromo because of their alliance and integration with the Abyssinian kingdom were successful in ultimately controlling the political power of the kingdom. The *Yajjuu* Oromo were successful in ruling the kingdom by installing puppet *Atses* during *Zamane Masafent*. In addition, the Oromo in Gojjam remained the masters of the region during the Gondarine period (1632-1855). Except during the brief time when *Ras* Michael Sehul was the kingmaker in Gondar, the Oromo were masters of the Christian Abyssinian kingdom for a century, from 1755-1855. This was the century of the Oromo in Abyssinian political history. During this time, the northern minority Oromo communities shaped and reshaped the political, social, linguistic, and cultural landscapes of the kingdom. Whereas they too were being continually assimilated to the Abyssinian identity as their estrangement by the rest of the Oromo of the present Oromia State, who remained mostly under the Gadaa government and in a continued socio-political and military stand-off with the kingdom, continued. (Demmeksa, 2018a, pp 484-486)

Note to Chapter 5

1 It was the name of the territory east, northeast, and southeast of Lake Tana.

2 Professor Fikre Tolossa Jiksa, as noted above, on the other hand, argues that the name Habasha has nothing to do with either Amhara or Tigre people (Jiksa, 2016, p. 249). It is a name given to the early-arrived Jews (Ag'azis) by the late arrived Jews. The former were those Jews who had come to Ethiopia following the son of King Solomon, who, the legend claims, established the Solomonic Dynasty in northeast Africa in the early 9th century BCE. The latter were those who fled to the region, which has now become northern Ethiopia and Eritrea, during the 598 BCE Babylonian invasion of Israel. The name indicates the racial impurity of the former because of centuries of intermingling with the indigenous peoples. After about four hundred years, the Agazian (Jews) had adopted the local culture and had become a mixed race. The latecomer Jews saw this as impurity and as becoming gentile and gave them the name "Habasha" to mean adulterated, impure, dirty, polluted, or mixed. In return, the Agazians (settled Jews) called the newly arriving Jews "Falasha" to mean immigrants, stateless, or wonderer.

3 Shawa and Shewa are used interchangeably in this work.

4 Etchege of Debre Libanos, Aqabe Sa'at of Hayq, and Nibura'ed of Aksum competed for the influence of the imperial court since the 16th century (Tafla, 1987, p. 901). However, the Etcheges gained prominence following the officiating of their Tewahdo doctrine by the *Atse*s. Particularly after the dominance of Shewan monarchs, the latter two lost importance. The Abuna of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church maintains the *Etchege* title to the see of Tekle Haimanot and the archbishop to Aksum dioceses.

5 Tafla (1987) notes: "Aqabe Se'at is the title of the cleric who was in charge of the schedule of the *Atse* as well as who blessed the table of the imperial family" (p. 882).

6 This army was the first in Abyssinian history to be based on the plundering of food from the local communities for its provisions (see Tafla, 1987, p. 363). The army forced the neighborhoods where it camps to provide them with food, including grains and meat. Because of such free riding and living in the community, it soon became popular and attracted many young people to join. Its number became its strength. After Yekuno Amlak, plundering became the tradition of the Abyssinian army. Wherever it camped, it devastated the local community both from their food and from their environment.

7 Some suggest that the name is from the name of the district "Baga" in the Adulis inscription while others suggest that it is derived from the Amharic word for a sheep, "bag" and followed by "meder" which means land or country (for more, see Blundell, 1922, p. 537).

8 He was believed to have been born in the locality known in its Oromo name as Itisa in Bulga (Tafla, 1987, p. 911).

9 Etchege is a title, which means the head of all monks. Hence, he is head of all the bishops and arc bishops. After the Abyssinian Church broke independent from the Egyptian Coptic Church after one and half millennia in the 1950s, the title almost became synonymous with the patriarch of the Church. The Patriarch of the Abyssinian Church is the Echege and head of all bishops of the Church.

10 The Abyssinian Church canonized Abba Yesus Moa, saint.

11 Until the two were separated in 1974 after the fall of the monarchy, the church of Abyssinia exercised enormous political power including in the process of the Abyssinian colonization of the southern NNPs of the Ethiopian Federation, including the Oromo. It promoted the supremacy of the Abyssinian Christians over other Christians and the Abyssinian people over the other people. Most importantly, it played a very damaging role in blasphemous records of the history and identity of the other peoples. The source of the culture of beggary, which has been considered socially unacceptable among most of the non-Abyssinians in the Ethiopian Federation, is traceable to the Kingdom of Abyssinian and its Orthodox church. The church is also credited for the expansion of traditional church education, church music, historical, political, and religious recording, and building and maintenances of historical churches and artifacts in the Abyssinian kingdom and beyond.

12 Budge (1928, p. 3) note that the people called themselves Bhera Geez (ብሐረ ግዕዝ) meaning "the country of migration" or Behera Agazi (ብሐረ አግዓዚ) "the country of migrated (i. e. free) man." This name, in its corrupt form, survives today as Akile Guzay, attributed to southern Eritrea (Sellassie, 1972, p. 27).

13 Sir E.A. Wallis Budge was one of the most favored Ethiopian historians ever. He was instrumental in writing the Abyssinian legends and myths into the history of Ethiopia in 1928, at the critical time where it needed such justification and legitimization the most to consolidate its massive expansion and colonization of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For his service to the Empire of Abyssinia as its favorite historian serving almost as a mouthpiece of the Abyssinian legends and myths, he won a third-class Order of Star of Ethiopia from *Atse* Menelik II in a letter written by the *Atse* in June 1893 (Eth. Calendar) in Addis Ababa. He was proud to show such a diploma to everyone by printing it in his book. See the diploma certifying the grant of the Order on the plate between pages 587 and 589 in Budge (1928, Volume II), *A History of Ethiopia: Nubia and Abyssinia (According to the Hieroglyphic inscriptions of Egypt and Nubia, and the Ethiopian chronicles)*.

14 Recently a newer version of the story appeared on Addis Admas (Volume 15 Number 814, 2007 Eth. C.), one of the local weekly newspapers in Amharic (See pages 9 and 19 of its publication on 16 Saturday 2007 Eth. Calendar). Referring to the unknown book, Book of Suba, probably one of the Abyssinian church

traditional writing, one Fitsum Abayneh tried to associate the name Ethiopia with one of the sons of Abraham in his bid to find the source of the etymological name Ethiopia. He wrote that Melchizedek blessed Abraham (Gen.14: 18-20) and he took the three sons of Abraham to a place called Halo. They offered non-blood sacrifice there, and he blessed them. At Halo Melchizedek professed Ethe'el will live around River Gion and he will drink from it. He advised Ethe'el to offer to his God, among others, the Ankeop he will find in that land. Ethe'el decided to travel to the source of Blue Nile. He first traveled from Halo to Sinland. From there he was guided by the spirit of God for four hundred days and arrived at the source of Gion River, which the writer took it as the Blue Nile, the land of gold known as Eyaspidia and Yop. For an unknown reason, Ethe'el came to be known as Ethiop. Ethiop named the land of the source of Blue Nile and where it flows Ethiopia. The meaning of Ethiopia, according to the writer, is the "gold offered to God."

15 At this junction, it is important to inform the reader that the Egyptian Church would manage to have control over the Kingdom of Abyssinia for about six hundred years. The Coptic Church appointed Egyptian bishops who were head of the Church in Abyssinian and had, among others, the duty of crowning its kings would continue to head the church. The Church would have entitlement to a third of the land of the kingdom since the late 13th century and would have a significant influence on the social, cultural, and economic policies and the daily administration of the kingdom. The Egyptian Bishops would always have Egyptian interests in their heart and, hence, Egypt would continue to have an indirect influence on the kingdom. This would continue neither without notice nor without resistance. The struggle for autocephaly would grow steadily over the centuries. Finally, the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahdo* Church would achieve autocephaly from the Coptic Church (See of St. Mark) in 1959 and would establish its See, the See of St. Tekle Haymanot. This would end the 1600 years of the Egyptian Coptic Church's influences in Abyssinia.

16 Amara refers to both geography and people. As geography, it represents one of the districts of the Abyssinian kingdom located between Gojjam, Shewa, and Begemeder. As people, it represents the Amhara people who expanded from Amara district to the rest of the present Amhara State starting from the 13th century.

17 As Amhara has become a useless civic identity in present Ethiopia but elites who still subscribe to this identity hope to revive it in the name of national unity and nation-state building. Amhara is not a nationality; it is composed of many NNPs with no single dominant group. Amhara is Agew, Beja, Kimant, Quara, Tigre, Oromo, Amara, Gafat, Afar, Bilen, Kunama, Felasha, Argoba, etc. It is not a single ethnicity or nationality by any standard. It is only a failed civic identity built around the Abyssinian monarchy. Because arrogance does not allow them to build on their ancestral nationality or they hesitate to choose either paternal or maternal descent as most of them are mixed, or they cannot build a new instrumental identity or resurrect the fallen civic identity that was

built based on discredited legends and fables, some of the Amhara political elites are not happy at all to see the glorious resurrection of the ancient national identities of the NNPs of the Ethiopian Federation. They have long aspired to the resurrection of the Abyssinian kingdom where their predecessors have made for themselves a distinct civic identity and a prestigious social class. During the Imperial regime in modern Ethiopia, they were able to portray themselves as the true civic nationals of the Empire, hence the true Ethiopians. The benefit of doing so was enormous. They were considered as the true nation-state builders and sometimes as uncivilized "civilizers," whereas all the NNPs of the expanded kingdom (the Empire of Abyssinia-cum-modern Ethiopia) were forced to assimilate to their identity. This has remained the ideal state they aspire. They have continued the futile attempt to restore it. Time has changed; so, did the political system but few self-proclaimed Amhara elites have not given up. They seem to have little understanding of democracy and the universal rights of peoples to self-determination. They seem to have stuck in the past. They wish the return the old imperial system that had glorified them and ensured their total dominance in modern Ethiopia since the late 19th century. They try to peruse this futile endeavour but apparently as an existential struggle for their lost instrumentalist identity through the perverted promotion of the so-called "Ethiopian Unity" and "Ethiopian nation-state," which literally means resorting to the one-language (Amharic), one national identity (Amhara) and one culture (Amhara-centred Christian culture), and unitary authoritarian government in the country of over eight NNPs and over seventy-two registered languages, and as much cultural diversity. It is an absurdity.

18 Amharic is classified officially as a Semitic language. However, some linguistic researchers agree that Amharic is a mix of local Cushitic language and Arab Semitic and Aksumite Ge'ez (Semitic) languages. In their bid to give it Ethiopian (Cushitic) identity, mainly since 2015, some Abyssinian politicians and a few pseudo-historians have started to argue (mainly on www.ethiomedia.com) that it is a Cushitic language. They suggest that its classification as Semitic language was a mistake. Some of them claim that the Amharic language predated the Amhara people and it created the Amhara identity; while others assert that the Amhara people created Amharic and it was created in the 13th century. However, both sides want Amharic to be recognized as the Cushitic language for instrumental purposes. Their futile goal is to reverse the adoption of the Latin alphabet since the early 1990s for Oromo, Sidama, Somali, Afar, etc. languages in Ethiopia. They wish that these languages abandon Latin and adopt the Ethiopic (Amharic) alphabet that would restore the Abyssinian dominance of the imperial era. They are particularly angry and filled with antipathy that the Oromo (not only the single largest nation but also the largest and the richest State that holds the key to the success of the Ethiopian Federation) have adopted *Qubee* (adapted Latin alphabet) for their language, Afaan Oromo. They do so in contradiction to the long-held Semitic origin of Abyssinian peoples (Amhara and Tigre) and the legend of the descent of its kings from King Solomon of Israel. In effect, they are dismantling the Abyssinian "history" which has been based on the legend of

origin of its people and its kings and the foundation of their Coptic Orthodox Christianity.

19 The civic Amhara identity that was in the making under the Kingdom of Abyssinia is lost in present Ethiopia. The kingdom built a civic national identity known as Habasha based on the initiatives that began by the Aksumites. Because of historical and linguistic reasons, the Habasha identity was split into Amhara and Tigre identities. The first was civic because it has no element of nationality. It is a remarkably diverse multi-national polity. It became more of a geographic representation. The latter was national because it was able to maintain its core national identity. As a result, the second has survived as a national identity. The Tigraway are now one of the NNPs of the Ethiopian Federation. The same cannot be said about Amhara's unfunded but claimed national identity.

20 This may have helped the advanced development of monastic culture in the region. The many cave church hand-hewn into the cliffs of mountains in present in Tigray State is said to have been built during the same time.

21 A similar legendary story, based on some historical events, emerged in later sources that tell the royal line of Gondar and Shawa were established from the bloodline of Lebna Dengel. An alleged young son of Lebna Dengel, who was left behind in Shewa to wander, for an unknown reason, when his family fled to mountain hideouts in the Siemen and Tigray from the war of conquest of Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi. According to Tafla (1987, pp. 989, 990), a small boy, Ya'eqob, was believed to have been left at Game in Menz. He wandered during Muslim occupation from place to place. Finally, he married a woman from Gojjam by the name Negsta Azeb and gave birth to three boys and one daughter before his death in 1557. One of his sons, Garram Fasil, became the father of Susenyos, the founder of the Gondar Dynasty. One of the other sons, Seggewa Qal had a son called Warede Qal who had a daughter called Sanbalt. Sanbalt is alleged to have given birth to Nagasi, the founder of the Shewan Dynasty.

22 King Lalibella (later saint) of the Zagwe Dynasty is credited for the construction of magnificent rock-hewn churches in Roha in Abyssinian historiography and its Coptic Church hagiography. The churches are known as Lalibella Churches. They are eleven in number.

Nonetheless, the identity of the actual builders of the Churches has remained an issue of contestation. Sergew Hable Sellassie explains that there are different opinions as to who built the churches (Sellassie, 1972, pp. 273-274). On one hand, the hagiography of Saint Lalibella, which was written by a monk named Abba Amba a few centuries later (in the late 14th or early 15th century), recorded that it was built by Lalibella where angles joined the workforce working twice as much as his men at night. There is no rationality in this opinion. On the other hand, a local oral tradition that has become part of Abyssinian pseudo-history asserts that 4,000-5,000 persecuted Christian Copts who came to the region

from Egypt built the churches. Atsme Giorgis, quoting what he called "many experts and scholars," wrote, "Negus [king] Lalibella went down to Egypt when his brother persecuted him. There he collected about 60,000 Christians who had been harassed by the Muslim … he attained power with the aid of this army. He entered Roha and had the monolithic churches hewn by the hands of these Amara" (Tafla, 1987, pp. 206-207).

The latter opinion is supported by ample evidence. First, the time coincides with the Saracen's persecution of Coptic Christians in Egypt. Also, the clergy at Roha told Alvarez, who lived in Abyssinia from 1520 to 1527, has reportedly stated, "[A]ll the work of these churches [Lalibella Churches] was done in twenty-four-years, and that this is written, and that they were made by Gibetas [Egyptians]; white men, for they well know that they [the Zagweans] do not know how to do any well-executed work" (Budge, 1928, p. 618). The renowned French geographer and writer, Jacques Élisée Reclus, also stated, "The workmen who carved out these curious subterranean churches are traditionally stated to have been Christian refugees from Egypt" (Reclus, 1892, p. 170). Furthermore, historian C. Conti Rossini believes that Arab and Byzantine influences were present in the construction of these churches. The architecture and symbols on the churches support Rossini's belief. Some curious Ethiopians include the Greeks among those who built the Lalibella Churches.

Despite this evidence which suggests the involvement of outsiders in the building of the Lalibella Churches, most "patriotic" Abyssinian elites and historians believe that the Churches were built by Abyssinians; and they were the result of the continuation of the Aksumite civilization, which by itself is believed a remnant of Greek civilization. Due to a lack of uncontested historical evidence of any kind on who planned and built the Churches, the contestation will remain.

23 It is important to note that had there been a "Solomonic" kingdom established by the legendary son of King Solomon, Menelik I, it certainly would have been a Jewish kingdom; and it would remain so. It is also equally important to note that the Aksumite kingdom was a pagan kingdom until it accepted Christianity in the 4th Century CE. Its kings were pagans. King Ezana (Eisana) in the 4th century CE was proud to be dependent on Mahrem: a god of war (Jones & Monroe, 1935) or deity of import (Barrera, 2006). There has been no record of a Judaic kingdom in Abyssinia; neither before nor after Aksum. Awkwardly, the so-called Solomonic kingdom not only confessed Christianity but also considered itself the "defender of the faith."

24 The new dynasty was "marked by great literary renaissance" (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 53). The royal chronicles started to be written by church chroniclers. The literary work that had been limited to the translations from Greek by the famous Nine Saints, saw a stride through an extensive translation from Coptic and Arabic sources, lives of local worthies such as Saint Tekle Haimanot and Saint Labella were written, in addition to stories of devotional works, hymns, prayers, litanies, and homilies (Jones & Monroe, 1935, pp. 53-54). The Nine Saints: Pantelewon, Gerima (Issac or Yeshaq), Afse, Guba, Alef, Yim'ata, Ze-

Mikael (Aregawi), Liqanos, and Sehma (Sellassie, 1972, p. 115) were learned monks who came to Aksum (from Rome (Aregawi, Gerima, and Pentelewon) and Eastern Roman Empire) fleeing the persecution from Pope Leo the Great because they remained faithful to the pre-Caledonian teachings. They arrived in Aksum in 480 CE after staying for some time at St. Pachomius' Monastery in Egypt. They are credited for translation of the bible from Greek to Geez, the vocalization of the Geez alphabets, introduction of literary works, church music (including training St. Yared), establishment of monasteries and monastic order, and Syrian style architecture in Aksum. Even though the Nine Saints were not Aksumite (Tigrain) of Amhara, the Abyssinian people in general and the Abyssinian Church, in particular, take great pride in them and considers them as their own and as the founding fathers of the Church and the Judo-Christian culture and tradition of Abyssinia.

25 The name Argoba is said to have been derived from an Amharic expression ዓረብ ገባ – 'the Arabs have entered/arrived.' Gradually this expression, in its shortened form, Argoba, became the name of these Arab people who entered the Abyssinian Kingdom.

26 Factors that may have contributed in rendering the importing of Arabian Islamic culture useless and instead, helped in the evolution of the unique Islamic culture that has allowed peaceful coexistence and genuine collaboration and cooperation among Christians, Muslims, *Waaqeffataa* (believed in *Waaqa*, the Oromo name for singular universal divinity), and other indigenous believers for a total of over fourteen hundred years include:

First, Islam was initially introduced in a gradual snowball process. This had allowed the new converts to internalize the new religion within their context. It took them a long time to adapt.

Second, Islam was introduced as an alternative and as a competing religion to Christianity. It was not introduced as a decree or by mass forced conversion. It was introduced not to people who had no faith, but to "the people of the book"-the Jews and the Christians-who were introduced to Abrahamic religion before the advent of Islam under Prophet Mohammad. This perhaps had allowed the inter-religious exchange of views and opinions not only between the two Abrahamic religions but also between the two and the local traditional monotheistic religions, *Waaqeffannaa*, of the Oromo. Judaism, which was widely practiced by Abyssinian Jews, might have also helped by offering an alternative.

Third, *Waaqeffannaa*, being the ancient base religion upon which the other two expanded, has served as a buffer between Islam and Christianity since their introduction into the Oromo ancestral territories. *Waaqeffannaa*, being a monotheistic faith, does not disapprove of either Christianity or Islam. It sees them as different cultures of worshiping the one true God, *Waaqa*. As a result, in the Oromo Land, there was no or little need to have an external religious culture of Islam in addition to or place of the existing culture and tradition. Instead, the *Waaqeffannaa* tradition may have encouraged Muslims to develop

their own local Islamic culture and tradition within the framework of the overall prevailing mainstream tradition.

Fourth, Islam was introduced into Abyssinian territories with the context of the historical relationship that had existed between the Christian king of Aksum and Prophet Mohammad in the early 7th century. The trust between the two had been reflected in the relationship between the Christians and early Muslims. The Muslims had faith in the Christians for their safety, and the Muslims had maintained the advice of their prophet not to declare jihad on Habasha. The mutual trust that started in this way promoted close cooperation, peaceful co-existence, and social and cultural integration rather than religious segregation. There was no need to import Arabian Islamic culture but to evolve one.

Fifth, because Islam was introduced initially through merchants that had settled among the local community as traders, their social and trade interdependence did not encourage segregation. The Muslim traders, because they did not own land, depended on the local agriculturalists and pastoralists for their trade-in as much as the locals depended on the products that the traders were bringing from the coastal seaports. The interdependence was indispensable to both. Such interdependence naturally dictates a socio-cultural model of mutual understanding and continuous cooperation. At the very formation of such interdependent communities, this would allow cultural integration, including religious culture, instead of cultural segregation.

Sixth, the early Islamic communities soon became characteristically local because there were not many foreigners, with Arabic Islamic culture, to dominate. The communities, as they grow and expand, took the form of local traditional society than Arabic. The leaders of those early communities were local chieftains. They managed to build their Islamic communities in a structure similar to that of their Abyssinian counterparts.

27 It was in the southeast of Shawa, southeast of the Abyssinian kingdom. It was one of the old sultanates.

28 Its historical existence is undoubted, but its historical location is controversial among historians. Someplace it in Shewa between Denakil and Yejju, another place it in Warra Jarso northeast of Harar, some take it to Sidama area in the south.

29 It was a dynasty of Argoba people, an ethnic group inhabiting the eastern escarpment of Shewa. They are traditionally associated with the Arab people of south Yemen and are predominantly Muslim, and hence their name is presumed to have been derived from two Amharic words, 'Arab' and 'gabba', to finally form Argoba to mean "the Arabs have come."

30 The sultanate of Yifat controlled the trade between Hara and the Abyssinian kingdom for many centuries. It was ruled by a dynasty whose leaders had the title of Walasma, Sultan, or Qas; and though it came under Shewa probably in

the 18th century, it continued to be ruled by members of the same dynasty (Tafla, 1987, pp. 991-992).

31 The kingdom was contained to the present territory of southern Eritrea, Tigray State, and most of the Amhara States of the Ethiopian Federation, and according to some Ethiopist, some vassal provinces in present-day Benishangul Gumuz, and western Oromia states of the federation.

32 There exists another person who lived in the 17th century by the same name. Some Ethiopist scholars claim that he was an Abyssinian philosopher from Aksum who authored *Hatata Zera Ya'eqob* in 1667 with the given name Warkie. Werkie (Zera Ya'eqob) was born in 1559 and died in 1692. Some other Ethiopist scholars, including the famous professor Getachew Haile, however, dispute the claim; and they argue that the author of the two philosophical volumes commonly known as *Hateta Zera Ya'eqob* was a Catholic missionary who lived in Abyssinia by the name Padre Guisto da Urbino who used Zera Ya'eqob as pen name not to be excommunicated by his church due to the heretical nature of his work. Some non-Abyssinian scholars, particularly Carlos Conti Rossini and Eugen Mitwoch could be the sources of evidence for Getachew Haile's assertion. Hence, I make the distinction between the two: Zera Ya'eqob the *Atse* and Zera Ya'eqob the philosopher.

33 Abyssinian king defeated sultanate of Ifat, Amde Tsion (r. 1314-1344), in 1332 CE. The victory gave the Abyssinian kingdom to consolidate its power in the north Shewa district of present-day Amhara State due to the elimination of the Muslim principality of Shawa. Three decades later, in 1364 remnants of the Ifat sultanate reorganized themselves and established the Sultanate of Adal near Harar at Dakar. The Sultanate of Adal soon became the most powerful Muslim sultanate in the Horn of Africa controlling the trade route from inland to the port of Zeila.

34 "Gada [Gadaa] System is a system of generation segments or Gadaa classes that succeed each other every eight years in assuming political, military, judicial, legislative and ritual responsibilities" (Legesse, 2006, p. 104).

35 For a details on the legend, including the full text of the letter, see Sellassie (1972, pp. 254-261).

36 For detail account of the visit, see Chapter XIV. Marco Polo in Africa (page 185-200) in George Makepeace Towle (1880). *Young Falks Heroes of History. Marco Polo: His Travels and Adventures*. Boston: Lee and Sheppard Publishers.

37 This was the year the Portuguese navigator, Bartolommeo Dias, reached the Cape of Good Hope. In 1497, Vasco da Gama discovered the sea root in India.

38 Jones & Monroe (1935, p. 58) explain that the works of this Italian painter have had a profound effect on Abyssinian art. He was commissioned by the king (Constantine II, r. 1478-1484), to decorate the walls of many Abyssinian church buildings. The king admired greatly his skills. He lived in Abyssinia for more

than forty years painting the walls of the churches. In his old age, Alvarez who arrived in Abyssinia in 1520 met him. By then he had executed numerous paintings. Alvarez saw many of his paintings in various parts of the country. Because of his influence, Jones, and Monroe (1935) comment, "The miniatures of the Abyssinian manuscripts, curious and grotesque … show distinct signs of Italian influence in such details as the style of dress" (p. 58). Atsme Giorgis, in his part, recorded that *Atse* Be'ede Mariam (r. 1468-1478), the predecessor of Constantine, had a portrait of Mary and Jesus Christ painted by the hands of Franks- white foreigners (Tafla, 1987, p. 423). These Franks were two Venetians, Nicholas Branca Leon, and Thomas Gradinego, who were detained in Abyssinia since the time of by *Atse* Be'ede Mariam (Bruce, 1791, p. 337). Bruce also makes it clear that Bracaleone (Branca Leon) was not only one of these white foreigners but also the one whose painting of Virgin Marry had created a rebellion. He states, "[I]n Bæda Mariam's reign the whole country was in rebellion because the king had directed the Virgin Mary to be painted by one Branca Leon, a Venetian painter" (Bruce 1791, p. 332).

39 Though she was a Muslim by birth, a daughter of the Muslim king of Hadiyya, some say from Dawwaro, by the name Muhammad, converted to Christianity when married to *Atse* Zrea Ya'ekob (r. 1434–1468). She served her husband *Atse* Zera Ya'ekob and *Atse* Baede Mariam (r. 1468 – 1478) as a regent. She remained powerful during the reigns of *Atse* Eskinder (r. 1478–1494) and *Atse* Na'od (r. 1494-1508). She was both powerful and keen to establish an alliance with another Christian kingdom and to stop the expansion of Islam to the Highlands of Abyssinia. She served as a regent to her husband *Atse* Zera Ya'ekob and *Atse* Baede Mariam (r. 1468 – 1478). She was still powerful during the reigns of *Atse* Eskinder (r. 1478–1494) and *Atse* Na'od. Following the sudden death of Na'od in 1508, the elderly Eleni (d. 1522) immediately dispatched her trusted court server as an envoy to Europe in 1509. She was able to perceive the danger of Islam to her kingdom and the help of Portugal to save it.

40 Budge (1928, p. 330) says she sent an embassy to the last Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, Kansuh al-Ghuri in 1516. Because the sultan died, she could not receive any help.

41 For details of Eleni's life and achievements, see Pankhurst, R. (2009). T.aytu's Foremothers: Queen Əleni, Queen Säblä Wängel, and Bati Dəl Wämbära. In S. Ege, H. Aspen, B. Teferra, & S. Bekele (Ed.), Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. I, pp. 51-63. Trondheim: Department of Social Anthropology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

42 Russell (1985, p. 127) wrote that Matthew was detained for "several years."

43 Queen Eleni, in the legend of the Abyssinian Church, is said to have brought part of the remains of half of the cross on which Jesus Christ, according to Christianity, was crucified on it from Jerusalem. The letter sent to King Manuel reads: "And with this our ambassador Matthew we send you a cross made of the

wood on which Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified in Jerusalem, which wood was brought to me from the said Jerusalem, from which I made two crosses: one remains with us, and this other we send it to you with our embassy. And the said wood is black, and it has a small silver ring" (Thomas, 1938, p. 91). The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church faithful believe that these remains of the cross are hosted at the geographically secluded Gishen Amba monastery in Amhara State. If the legend has an element of truth in it (or is believed to be true), this gift from a faithful Christian to a believing Christian was incredibly significant. This legend, in its elaborate and partly contradictory form of the account in the letter to King Manuel form of the legendary tradition of the church, serves as the foundation of the Church festival of Meskel (the finding of the "true cross") which has relatively recently replaced or being celebrated parallel to the traditional New Year celebrations and annual tanks giving festivals of most of the southern and central Ethiopian NNPs. The Ethiopian NNPs knew Meskel in its related names and symbol before they came to know Christianity.

44 It defines the mutual and harmonious relationship between social and cosmic order.

45 Royal intermarriage, as a culture of medieval politics of hegemony, had been the ploy they had mastered within their kingdom. They further strategized to the level of interfaith royal intermarriage. The best illustration is the 14th-century intermarriage between the Christian *Atse* Zerea Ya'ekob and Eleni, the daughter of Hadiyyan Muslim, Mohammed. In the later centuries, the royal family of the Abyssinian kingdom not only intermarried with Muslims ending in the conversion of the queen but also professed both Christianity and Islam.

46 *Buttaa* is also the name for changes of Gadaa grades (stages/classes) every eight years as well as the ceremonial feast offered to the *foollee* (singing and dancing youth) by the newly initiated *luba*.

47 Jeldessa is an Oromo name. It means monkey. There are many places named like this throughout Oromia.

48 It is in the northwest of Macha, near Lake Tana in the district of Chankar Ber near Dangal Ber according to James Bruce noted in Tafla (1987). Dr. Lapiso G. Delebo on the other hand is specific. According to Delebo the battle of Wayna Daga was fought in the Denqez Kebele near Lake Tana. He adds Dembia, the country of the Felasha, was the permanent administrative center of Ahmad Gragn for his domain that included Abyssinia, Djibouti, and Somalia from 1535-1543. (For more, see Delebo, 1982 Eth. C. pp.127, 140-141)

49 Bati del-Wonberra – the wife of Ahmad Gragn succeeded in organizing the Adal army into resistance. Fighting continued until in 1559 both sides got exhausted and could not inflict any further serious damage on each other (Orwin, 2005a, p.13)

[50] *Finna* is an overall development of the Oromo nation that oftentimes takes biological exposition in the ascending order of *Guddina, Gabbina, Bal'ina, Badhaadhina, Hormaata, Dagaaga, and Dagaa-Hora* (Verharen, 2013a, pp. 193–194; Jalata, 2005, p. 32). One of the earliest explanations of Finna comes from Jalata (1996). He explains:

> The Oromo have a very complex theory that explained phases and features of development in the Oromo society; the Oromo concept of development is called finna in southern Oromia (Kassam, forthcoming; Megerssa, 1993a). Finna embodies the cumulative historical and contemporary social changes that take place to produce a new social order. According to Kassam (forthcoming), finna "represents the legacy of the past which each generation inherits from its forefathers and which it transforms; it is the fertile patrimony held in trust by the present generation which it will enrich and bequeath to future generations . . . it describes a movement emanating from the inside, a developing of the inner potential of society based on the cultural roots it has already laid down." (p. 112)

CHAPTER 6

EMPIRE OF ABYSSINIA (1889-1930)

Abyssinia Proper (kingdom of Abyssinia) was the region that has now become Tigray and Amhara states of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea. It was expanded at least three-fold to build the Empire of Abyssinia-cum-modern Ethiopia. By the Empire of Abyssinia, I refer to the empire built by *Atse* Menelik II (r. 1889-1913) in the last decades of the 19th century and handed over to *Atse* Haile Selassie I (r. 1930-1974). It was an empire built around the core ancient Kingdom of Abyssinia. The new empire was a combination of the present Amhara and Tigray States (Abyssinia Proper, Kingdom of Abyssinia) and the formerly independent kingdoms, sultanates, and republican states, and traditional self-administering peoples of NNPs in the southern, south-western and south-eastern regions, such as Hadiyya, Sidama, Janjero, Gamo, Dawuro, Kembata, Wolaita, Kaffa, Alaba, Guragie, Oromo kingdoms of Limmu, Gumma, Gomma, Gera, Jimma, Leqa Neqemte and Leqa Qellem, the republican Oromo traditional states of Arsi, Borana, Itu-Humbana, Karayyu, Gujii, Macha, Tulama, Gambella, Benishangul, Gumuz, the Muslim sultanates and Emirates of Ogden, Afar, Harar, traditional self-administering peoples of the Omo region, etc. The non-Abyssinian territories that were incorporated into the new empire by *Atse* Menelik II from the late 1870s to the early 1910s constitute more than seventy of the NNPs of the Ethiopian

Federation. The new empire was carved from the Horn of Africa region by conquest and annexation.

The conquest and annexation were followed by *Abyssinaization* of the subjugated NNPs that "involved three principal components: the spread of *rist* system of land tenure, the adoption of Amharic, and the expansion of the Orthodox Church" (Donham, 1986, p. 11). It was governed by "a system amounting in effect to a military autocracy" (Hodson, 1927, p. 122). This new empire of *Atse* Menelik II was maintained by his successors, *Lij* Iyasu IV (1913-1916), *Etegie* Zawditu Menelik (r. 1916-1930) and *Atse* Haile Selassie I (r. 1930-1974) until it was gradually transformed into the Empire of Ethiopia-cum-modern Ethiopia.

In this chapter, I shall deliberate briefly: first, on the formation of the Kingdom of Shewa and the growing power of its last king, *Negus* Menelik; second, on the beginning of the building of the Empire of Abyssinia; third, on *Aste* Menelik II and the colonization project with emphasis on the power of firearms and the "colony countries"; fourth, on the legacy of *Atse* Menelik II in modern Ethiopia, followed by a brief discussion of the Empire before the inauguration of a constitutional monarchy under *Atse* Haile Selassie I. The emphasis shall be on the Shewan-based empire-building project and on expounding the *colonial thesis* that explains the formation of modern Ethiopia.

Kingdom of Shewa

A new dynasty that claimed the same mythical descent as the Gondarine Dynasty was inaugurated in Shewa in the late 17th century. There was no centralized political administration in Shewa before the appointment of *Negasi* by *Atse* Iyasu I (r. 1682–1706). However, there had been a rivalry of clergymen. They used to organize some supports among their faithful followers, usually aided with multiple myths and false prophecies. The administrator of the remote Shewa, which was cut off from the direct control from the political power from Gondar, exploited the rivalry among the clergy to his ambition of becoming the king of Shewa. The group who promoted the same myth of descent for Nagasi Kiristos (r. 1696-1703), as was for *Atse* Yekuno Amlak (r. 1270-1285) in the late 13th century, won the rivalry. The myth, in effect, established a Shewan Dynasty.

The newly produced myth of origin holds that the Shewan Dynasty shared the same descent as the Gondarine Dynasty. According to Atsme Giorgis, a legendary story based on some historical events emerged in a later source that tells the royal line of Gondar and Shewa were established from the bloodline of Lebna Dengel through his alleged young son who was left behind in Shewa

to wander when his family fled from Shewa to mountain hideouts in the Simen and Tigray from the war of conquest of Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi. According to Tafla (1987, pp. 989, 990), a small boy, Ya'eqob, was believed to have been left at Game in Menz. He wandered during the Muslim occupation from place to place. Finally, he married a woman from Gojjam by the name Negsta Azeb (queen of Azeb) and begotten three boys and one daughter before he died in 1557. One of his sons, Garram Fasil became the father of Susenyos, the founder of the Gondarine Dynasty. The other son, Seggawe-Qal had a son called Warda-Qal who had a daughter called Sanbalt. Sanbalt gave birth to Nagasi Kiristos, the alleged founder of the Shewan Dynasty. There is no explanation of why Ya'eqob did not join his brother (Gelawdewos) and his mother after the end of the war in 1543 (Tafla, 1987).

According to the legend and the Abyssinian chronicles, the Shewan Dynasty was established by Negasi Kristos[1] "settling the Christians and displacing the [Oromo]" based on the expropriation of the Oromo land in the *Gasha* system (Tafla, 1987, p. 503). Atsme Giorgis recorded that the Shewan Amharans say, "Gasha means land on which we settle by chasing out [Oromo] with our force, power, and skill" (Tafla, 1987, p. 503). The expropriated land, *Gasha*, was given to the instrumental clergy, the army contingent, and the tenant Christian immigrants who flocked south running away from the hostile environment of the barren northern mountainous regions of the kingdom. Kiristos ruled Shewa from 1696-1703.

The Kingdom of Shewa continued to expand into the neighboring Oromo country under its successive governors. By the time Ammeha Iyesus (d. 1775) was the chief of Shewa, the pocket districts of Menz, Tegulet, and Wagda had expanded by taking over some territory from some *Tuulamaa* Oromo clans. According to Atsme Giorgis (Tafla, 1987), Ammeha Iyesus led many small battles against the Oromo and expanded his territory in the hilly lands of present-day North Shewa *Zone* of Amhara State during his thirty years of rule from 1745-1775. *Ras* Asfa Wasan (d. 1808) succeeded him. Asfa Wasan added Agancha, Gidim, Antsokiya, and Efrata into his Ankober based territory and built many churches during his 32 years rule, from 1776-1808. His successor, Wasan Sagad (Walda Giorgis) (d. 1812) continued the project of his predecessors, which was interrupted only when the Wollo Oromo led by Yemam took him captive. Escaping from prison, once again the *Mared Azmach* became powerful: he declared himself *Ras* at Angolala and threatened to march on *Ras* Gugsa in Gondar. However, his slave killed him. His son, Sahele Selassie, succeeded him.

Sahele Selassie[2] (1813-1847) declared himself "*Ras* Sahele Selassie, king of Shewa" and claimed that he descended from the "Solomonic" line. Under its first king, but not officially crowned, Shewa grew even more powerful. It

undermined the declining Gondarine powers during the late decades of *Zamana Masafent* (1769-1855) and became an almost broken-off autonomous territory.

Sahle Selassie broke some Oromo resistance to the expansion of his kingdom through marriage and by exploiting competitive conflicts among the *Tuulamaa* Oromo. Initially, the *Tuulamaa* Oromo, who inhabit most of Shewa, did not submit to Sahele Selassie even though there were three compulsory expeditions against them every year. However, he managed to get the submission of some Oromo of Shewa through an arranged marriage. He wed his daughter to an Oromo war chief, *Dejazmach* Walda Micha'el Guddisa[3], governor of the province of Dobba, and the son of *Guddisa*. (*Guddisa* would later become the great grandfather of *Atse* Haile Selassie I.) In the conflict between the Abichu and Galaan Oromo that lasted for a decade, Sahele Selassie allied himself with the stressed side, the *Abicchu*, and subdued the *Galaan* using Oromo against the Oromo. After so many massacres of the Oromo in such wars, only some Oromo sub-clans of *Maccaa* and *Tuulamaa* submitted. After three decades of continued attacks on the *Tuulamaa* Oromo, his son *Negus* Hayla Melekot succeeded him.

Hayle Melekot (r. 1847-1855) declared himself king of Shewa. The new king fought many battles with the *Maccaa* and *Tuulamaa* Oromo who rejected his rule and unsuccessfully opted for their freedom that caused many battles to be fought and more of their land seceded to the Shewan kingdom. With the decline of the power of the Oromo in the Abyssinian kingdom, after the defeat of *Ras* Ali II by Kasa of Quara, the Oromo of Shewa started to reserve themselves from the war with *Negus* Hayle Melekot. The alliance of king Hayle Melekot of Shewa with *Ras* Ali II, after the latter was defeated by Kasa in Gojjam (and deposed from the rulership of the Abyssinian kingdom) and queen Warqitu, the ruler of Wollo, might have made the Oromo of Shewa passive against him.

Negus Hayle Melekot was succeeded by his young son, Sahle Mariam, Menelik,[4] but the young Menelik became captive of *Atse* Tewodros II and taken to Maqdala. This effectively ended the apparent autonomy of the kingdom of Shewa from the rulers of the Abyssinian kingdom.

The Kingdom of Shewa and *Atse* Menelik II

Despite relentless efforts, *Atse* Tewodros II (r. 1855-1868) could not stop the kingdom of Shewa from becoming autonomous. Starting from the reign of Sahele Selassie (r. 1813-1847), the Shewan kingdom operated almost independently until *Atse* Tewodros II subdued it in the 1860s defeating *Negus* Hayla Malakot. However, *Atse* Tewodros II took the king of Shewa and the

young heir to the dynastic throne, Menelik, to Maqdala. However, Menelik escaped secretly from Maqdala from the custody of *Atse* Tewodros II in 1865 with the help of queen Warqitu of Wollo, at whose camp he first arrived after his escape (Tafla, 1987, p. 585). Queen Warqitu provided a protecting army and provisions to Menelik on his way to his kingdom, Shewa, at the expense of her own son and two dozens of her dignitaries who were in the custody of *Atse* Tewodros II whom he massacred them all (Mekuria, 1983 Eth. C, pp. 24-25), after learning the involvement of the Queen in the escape of *Dajazmach* Menelik. The protection extended to him by the queen must have been enormous as Tewodros II must have pursued him in a rage. After arriving in Shewa three months after his escape, *Dajazmach* Menelik immediately declared himself king of Shewa.

When he was king of Shewa, Menelik started to establish and strengthen ties with European power to fulfil his ambition of becoming powerful enough to claim succession to the Abyssinian throne. His ambition was to colonize the neighbouring NNPs using European assistance. He had studied and learned how the small number of British army defeated the army of *Atse* Tewodros II in 1869 and how, since then, small European army regiments had been making colony countries in Africa: all with the power of modern firearms and effective training of the army. The target of his diplomatic relations and strategic alliance with European powers was therefore clear: acquiring as many firearms as possible, get assistance for army training, and surrounding himself with European advisors for his military conquests.

Already during the early years of his kingship of Shewa, Menelik understood that he must acquire firearms, trainers, and diplomatic support from Christian European powers that were ready to cooperate with him to achieve his ambitions. *Negus* Menelik was utterly clear that without absolute supremacy in firearms, European training of his army, and European strategic advice, he would not subdue the Oromo and other nations, nationalities, and peoples of the present Ethiopian Federation. Also, he was sure that unless he stockpiles firearms and increases his fighting force very significantly, he would not be able to declare himself "king of kings" of Abyssinia, according to tradition, and ascend the so-called Solomonic throne which would make him emperor in Abyssinia Proper. He must be sure that he had to achieve the later ambition to continue pursuing the former even though, as *Negus* of Shewa, he had already begun his colonial expansion. To this effect, in 1872, he established diplomatic relations with France, Italy, and Great Britain.

These European powers were competing with each other to place the Kingdom of Abyssinia under their sphere of influence. France and Italy were competing with Great Britain, who had occupied Aden (1839) and the islands of Perim and Socotra and controlled the Gulf of Aden for dominance in the

Horn of Africa and on the Red Sea trade. France had sent two scientific expeditions to Shewa in 1839 and 1842-1843 and had already developed an interest in the Horn of Africa. To fulfill this interest, France was soon engaged in an aggressive policy of relationship building with the coast people in the Gulf of Tadjourah in its effort to establish itself in the region. The relationship with Afars that was opened by the French entrepreneur Henri Lambert in 1857 had resulted in the Treaty of Paris of March 1862, signed by an Afar representative and the French minister of foreign affairs after the French commander Fleuriot de Langle made official contact with the sultans (Dubois, 2005, p. 359). The treaty recognized a French coastal zone to the north of Obock, a trading coastal center north of the port of Djibouti. From 1884 to 1888, the French governor, Léonce Lagarde, conducted a policy of active diplomacy in the region to establish French sovereignty over the perimeter of the Gulf of Tadjourah while maintaining good relations with *Negus* Menelik (Dubois, 2005, p. 359). *Negus* Menelik was not ready to disappoint France in its endeavor to establish itself as a colonial power in the strategic region. It was when Menelik needed support from Europe, particularly from France, the most in his quest to become *Atse*. France finally colonized Djibouti in 1885 with the blessing of Menelik. An Italian geographic expedition arrived in Shewa in 1876. Italy signed a trade treaty and a friendship treaty with *Negus* Menelik in May 1883 and October 1887. Great Britain replaced the Ottoman Empire in Egypt in 1882. It was in the process of expanding its colonial rule to coastal Somali-land, and Kenya. It wanted to maintain its position. To do so, it saw *Negus* Menelik as a powerful potential ally that it could not afford to lose to France or Italy[5], its competitors.

These created a perfect opportunity for *Negus* Menelik to maneuver tactfully them to fulfill his vision of building his empire using European arms, training, and advice. He continued to play each of them in his game. The three European powers, in their bid to win an alliance from *Negus* Menelik for their colonial interests in the region competitively armed and trained his army.[6] As a result, *Negus* Menelik's Shewan Kingdom became increasingly powerful.

The Beginning of the Building of Empire of Abyssinia

The British expedition to Abyssinia that resulted in the death of *Atse* Tewodros II (r. 1855-1868) in April 1868 left the kingdom to anarchy. Neither *Dajazmach* Kassa of Tigrie, the powerful but treasonous perpetrator, nor the Oromo of Yejju who had fought with the *Atse* and suffered the most from his brutality nor *Wagshum* Gobeze of Wag who appeared to be powerful and well placed nor *Dajazmach*[7] Menelik of Shewa who had run away from the custody

of the *Atse* at Maqdala with the help of the Queen of the Yejju Oromo could consolidate the state power. They, however, became contenders for the Abyssinian throne. The kingdom fell back to anarchy. Soon *Wagshum* Gobeze managed to crown himself *Atse* of the kingdom by the name Tekle Giorgis II in August 1868. He was not accepted because he did not command the submission of the contenders. The reign of the *Wagshum* did not last long. Three years later, after defeating Telke Giorgis II at Adwa in July 1871, *Dajazmach* Kassa was crowned in January 1872 *Atse* of Abyssinia at Aksum city. He adopted the crown name Yohannes IV.

Despite his consolidation of the state power, *Atse* Yohannes IV failed to acknowledge the multinational, multi-religious, and multicultural Abyssinian kingdom of his time. As Tewodros II before him, he embarked on the unification project highly capitalizing on the legendary origin of the kingdom and the "Solomonic" dynasty. His Abyssinia was Christian, *Habasha*, and the new Zion. This was his conviction and vision. To realize his vision of Abyssinia, his first targets were the Oromo of Wollo and Yajju to the south of his province of origin, Tigre. In Wollo and Yejju, Yohannes IV was harsh on Muslims. He forced the Muslim community into conversion to Christianity. Upon failing to convert, he massacred most of the resisting Muslim communities. Because of the genocide terror, most Muslims, including some *Rases* and the king, took up Christian names keeping their faith in their hearts. Since then, it has been quite common in Wollo that a person has both Christian and Muslim names in his names.

In the meantime, the king of Shewa became immensely powerful and started to claim the "Solomonic" throne for himself. However, *Atse* Yohannes IV was able to unify Abyssinia Proper once again under one *Atse* by signing a treaty with Negus Menelik of Shewa on the 14th of March 1878. According to the treaty, a win-win deal was struck between the two (Wylde, 1901). According to the agreement, Wylde (1901, p. 471) explains: *Negus* Menelik must pay tribute to *Atse* Yohannes, cease to be called the king of kings, build churches in the Wollo Oromo country, let *Atse* Yohannes's army freely pass through Shewa and provide it with providence while in Shewa. In return, *Negus* Menelik would be crowned king of Shewa and he shall rule the Wollo Oromo who are located "between Abyssinia [Tigre] and Shoa" and *Atse* Yohannes must help *Negus* Menelik in time of need (p. 471). Accordingly, *Atse* Yohannes IV crowned *Negus* Menelik on 26 March as *Negus* of Shewa and proclaimed, "I have crowned my son Menelik as *Negus* of Shewa, honor him as you honor me" (p. 471). In so doing, Yohannes IV finally subdued all the provincial kings of Gojjam, Begemeder, Lasta, and finally Shewa.

Meanwhile, *Negus* Menelik, king of Shewa, continued to expand his kingdom and grew wealthy and even more powerful. He defeated *Negus* Tekle

Haimanot whom *Atse* Yohannes IV had appointed king of Gojjam and Kaffa in 1882, a year after his appointment. He achieved concessions with *Atse* Yohannes IV: both political settlement and through intermarriages. For the former, *Atse* Menelik II would add Kaffa to his dominion and the son of the *Atse*, Araya Selassie would take the governorship of Wollo. For the latter, Araya Selassie would marry Askale Mariam, Zewditu[8], the daughter of *Negus* Menelik and *Negus* Menelik would marry *Tayitu Bitul*[9], the sister of Wele Bitul, the governor of the strategic Yejju province, laying between Tigre and Shewa. This locked the power struggle in the north and freed *Negus* Menelik to campaign extensively for the conquest of the southern NNPs who were not only poorly equipped and only traditionally trained for combat but also not in any way ready for large-scale war. He would, as I shall explain in the next section, soon control Harar, most of the Oromo countries, Kaffa, and other southern kingdoms, republican states, and independent peoples.

The growing power of *Negus* Menelik made him undisputed claimant of the Abyssinian throne, not even the heir apparent of the late *Atse* Yohannes IV could challenge his ascent. After having total control over the internal political scramble of Abyssinia, *Atse* Yohannes IV had focused on defending the kingdom from external forces. He had fought with the Egyptians, the Dervish, and Italians and defended his kingdom. However, he was killed in his battle with *Mahdist* Sudan at the Battle of Metemma, northwest of his kingdom in 1889. *Negus* Menelik,[10] instead of the son and heir of *Atse* Yohannes IV, *Ras* Mengesha declared himself "king of kings" of Abyssinia and was crowned *Atse* of Kingdom of Abyssinia. The new *Atse* set out to build a new empire, the Empire of Abyssinia.

Atse Menelik II and the Colonization Project

Atse Menelik II's empire-building project started in earnest by expanding his Shewan kingdom a few decades before he had become the *Atse* of Abyssinia. Some, for example, Gascon (2009), compares his Shewan kingdom with Germany's Prussia as a symbol of the origin of unity and division and suggest that his policy, which was sometimes inhumanely brutal, even a genocide, because of its excessive use of firearms for his colonization project of the non-Abyssinian nations and nationalities, to Bismarck's motto: "By blood and by fire" (p. 89). This very process of creation of the Empire of Abyssinia would implore an armed struggle for the right to national self-determination of the colonized and oppressed NNPs.

The empire building project was inspired by the "unification" project of the Kingdom of Abyssinia (Abyssinia Proper) of his predecessor, *Atse* Tewodros

II (r. 1855-1867), and the then prominent French, British, and Italian colonial empires in Africa. His claim was designed tactically not as colonization but as a "reunification" [11] project. Abyssinian rulers had repeatedly used the old-fashioned baseless claim of "reclaiming lost territory" as a pretext to invade and annex new territories in the south, south-west, and east of Abyssinian remote Christian highland. At various times, they used "unification" as the cause for the centralization as well as the expansion. The unification project of *Atse* Tewodros II and the "unification" project of *Atse* Menelik II, though similar in some respects, were different in terms of goals. The goal of the former was to unite the decentralized Abyssinia; hence it was an attempt at centralized state-building. Tewodros II conquered the then provinces of Abyssinia (Amhara[12], Gojam, Tigray, and Shewa) and briefly ruled them as a unified kingdom. The latter's goal was to expand the territory of Abyssinia by annexing formerly independent NNPs and their territories and bringing them under alien settlers overrule; hence it was empire building by colonization.

As a Christian *Atse*, like the European Christian colonizers, *Atse* Menelik II competed with these European colonizers on the scramble for Africa. He wanted to have a similar "sphere of influence" in the African continent through the mechanism of the scramble for Africa. He was the only powerful African leader to compete for African territory from inside the continent. In one of his declarations of intent, a similar circular letter addressed to Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, he made his contestation for the scrabble of Africa clear. In one of these circular letters, addressed to Queen Victoria of Great Britain in April 1891, *Atse* Menelik II declared "the former boundaries of Ethiopia as far as Khartoum and the Niza Lake, including all of the territories of the [Oromo]" and made his competitive colonial expansionist ambition in the region by adding " I have no intention at all of being an indifferent spectator, if the distant Powers hold the idea of dividing up Africa" (Menelik II quoted in Boahen, 1985, p. 4; 1987, p. 25).

With the declarative letter, *Atse* Menelik II joined the great powers of Europe of his time (France, Britain, and Italy) in the scramble for eastern Africa. His contented contestation and his conviction to enlarge his realm pushed *Atse* Menelik II to crush his less powerful neighboring nations to build and expand his kingdom to an empire. As the only African leader who took part indirectly in the scramble for Africa, his European counterpart recognized him tacitly as such mainly after his triumphant victory at the Battle of Adwa on the Italian colonial army. His racing for territory with European powers "became even more acute after the victory of Adwa in 1986" (Zewde quoted in Tibebu, 1995, p. 48). He set his ambitious claim to territorial limits in the southwest up to the source of the White Nile and in the southeast up to the Indian Ocean. Because he had tasted victory on one of them and saw that they

were not invincible, he assured himself that he too deserves the share from the colonization of his continent. His global ambition was to take his share from the scrabble for Africa as sovereign, able, and Christian *Atse* competing with his European colonial counter powers. Thus, his colonization of the NNPs to the south, south-east and south-west of his kingdom were as legitimate and as the colonization of the rest of Africa by European powers with only one exception: his was black-on-black and followed immediately by settler rulers from Abyssinia Proper, not a "distant power" ruled by proxy but an immediate neighbor.

The Power of Firearms

Before he embarked on his massive colonization project, *Atse* Menelik II had built his army, arms, and ammunition to an advanced level over a very short period. During the last two decades of *Zamane Masafent* (1830-1850), there were 28,000 matchlocks in the province of Tigray (Berhe, 2009, p. 52), the most armed province at the time due to its proximity to the main ports of Mitsewa and Asab through which arms were imported before its occupation by Italy. In 1881 *Nəgus* Menelik had an estimated 4,000 riflemen and 18,000 soldiers; but "in less than a decade, he had obtained some 25,000 rifles, almost entirely from the Italian and the French" (Etefa, 2012, p. 184). After the fall of the Emirate of Harar in 1887 following his victory at the Battle of Chelenko, *Nəgus* Menelik opened a huge market for the French arms traders from its ports at coastal Djibouti. The governor of the newly annexed Emirate, *Balambaras* (with promotion to *Dajazmach*, later *Ras*) Mekonnen, father of Tafari Mekonnen – later *Atse* Haile Selassie I – did a great job in enriching the Kingdom of Abyssinia with an uninterrupted flow of firearms from Europe and in creating an arms trade-based economy for the French colony at the coast. Marcus (1994) explains:

> Under Makonnen's guidance, the city [Harar] became the center of Shewa's arms trade, making the French-controlled Gulf of Tadjoura and its port of Obok dependent on the Ethiopian connection. French traders came to Harer and provided the Shewan government better weapons at lower prices. With so much competition, Makonnen was able to raise taxes and duties and arrange favorable payment schedules. By September 1887, the arms traffic in Harer overshadowed all other commerce. The business was so lucrative that the French colony at the coast was able to live off its proceeds, making it axiomatic in Paris that this source of revenue should be safeguarded. (p. 84)

In addition, King Umberto of Italy alone gave *Atse* Menelik II 28 cannons and 38,000 rifles in 1889 when *Ras* Mekonnen,[13] nephew of *Atse* Menelik II visited Rome (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 139). By 1893, *Atse* Menelik II had bought 83,000 European rifles and 29 canons (Boahen, 1987, p. 55) mostly through the support of France. The French traders were his main suppliers of firearms from the French port of Djibouti. In the same year, he received two million cartridges as a present from Italy (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 140). The shipments of cartridges found their way inland to Shewa from the Red Sea ports, which were under Italian control. In 1894, *Atse* Menelik was said to have five and a half million cartridges (Etefa, 2012, p. 184) and an estimated 100,000 rifles (Delebo, 1999 Eth. C.). The eastern city of Harar was flooded[14] with affordable arms from Djibouti to the extent "arms traffic in Harar overshadowed all other commerce" (Marcus, 1994, p. 84). A British resident in Aden during this time observed: "It is impossible to travel between Harar and Addis Ababa without repeatedly meeting caravans of rifles and cartridges. I should think there are more rifles, Gras, and Remingtons, in the country than there are men to carry them" (Etefa, 2012, p. 184). In addition to adding the arms and ammunitions that were gained from the defeated Italian colonial army[15] to the pile stock of the rifles and canons that he had before the battle of Adwa, more arms and ammunitions continued to come into the country from France through dealers in Harar. In total, Menelik II received 715, 000[16] rifles[17] and 50,000,000 ammunitions from European powers (Great Britain, France, Italy, and Russia[18]) during 1868-1900 (Darkwah, 1975, quoted in Melbaa, 1988, p. 60)[19].

Atse Menelik II was unstoppable in his south march. He was crushing some of the resistance he faced. His soldiers were armed to the tip of the noses with firearms. *Atse* Menelik II's regular troops, which was estimated between 73,000 and 120,000 at the Battle of Adwa against Italy in 1896 continued to increase. Also, a large number of troops were posted in the southern, eastern, and western new borderlines to safeguard his emerging empire while he would deal with the Italian invasion in the north of his old kingdom. Particularly after the psychological state of the army was boosted after defeating the Italian colonial army at the Battle of Adwa and the kingdom was soaring so high with triumph, *Atse* Menelik II was no short of army recruits. Including those which were posted at the southern, western, and eastern newly annexed territories under different regional governors, *Atse* Menelik II had more than half a million men strong modern army in the next few years after the victory at Adwa. His army was the largest and the most modern ever assembled on the African continent by an African leader before his time. With such military strength and triumphant morale, the *Atse* set to conquer as much as his European allies in the project of "the Scramble for Africa."

On the contrary, the main traditional and peaceful kingdoms and states that he attacked were so weak to resist his highly structured and significantly trained and well-equipped army of tens of thousands[20]. Because the smuggling of arms into the southern regions to the Abyssinian territory was controlled effectively and strategically, in most cases they had few to no firearms. The firearms used to come through the ports on the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. To reach the southern peoples they must be carried inland through the Abyssinian territory, especially after the conquest of Harar by the kingdom of Shewa in 1887. King Menelik, later *Atse* Menelik II, keenly starved the Oromo and other peoples to the south and southwest of his territory from acquiring firearms. Consequently, in the battles of unequal, the resistance forces to the well trained, better armed and well-equipped imperial army of *Atse* Menelik were left with no alternative but heavily depend on their traditional hand weapons like spears, shields made of animal skins, and some locally made iron tools which were backward by any standard of the day. The victor was known already before most of the battles were fought.

With the supremacy of its arms and its vast numbers, the Abyssinian army showed greater retribution of its history of catastrophic defeat by the army of Ahmad ibn Ibrahim Al-Ghazi (*Gragn*) in the early 16th century. The army of *Gragn,* being equipped with some two hundred matchlocks that the Abyssinians did not have, forced the Abyssinian army to break and flee, to use words of Jones & Monroe (1935, p. 82), "like chaff before the wind." *Gragn* overrun of the country and converted its Christians to Muslims. The conversion of Abyssinian people to Islam was so widespread that "in the words of Abyssinian chronicles, nine men in ten renounced the Christian faith and turned Muslim" (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 83). *Gragn* ruled Abyssinia until a decade later; the Christian Portuguese who came to the rescue of the falling kingdom killed him in 1543. Now, the Christian kingdom has the supremacy of firearms and a trained standing army, it could easily force its terms on the weaker and conquered NNPs, including instituting settler colonization among them and converting them in mass to Christianity.

By the end of his colonization project, *Atse* Menelik II had become militarily invincible not only to his "colony countries" but also to his European colonizers in the Horn of Africa region. Tibebu (2009) provides a concise summary of the military might of *Atse* Menelik II at the down of the 20th century:

> By playing European powers off against each other, and by importing a large number of arms from various sources, Menelik was able to create the largest and best-equipped army in Africa. At the 1902 military parade held in Addis Ababa to commemorate the Battle of Adwa, 600,000 troops armed with

> modern weapons were present. Of these, 90,000 belonged to the imperial standing army. There were an additional 100,000 troops that did not participate at the parade, bringing Ethiopia's total military strength to 700,000. Menelik's Ethiopia was the best-armed and most organized African state of its time. (p. 508)

Colonization Made Easy

The military onslaught from *Atse* Menelik II, in most cases, faced little armed resistance.[21] The most notable resistances were from the kingdom of Kaffa, the kingdom of Wolaita, and republican Oromo societies of *Tuulamaa, Maccaa, Arsii, and Harargee (Ituu and Humbanaa)*. The kingdom of Kaffa was well-organized and well-defended. Its defense army resisted the colonialist army of *Atse* Menelik II for many years. After several failed attempts, it was eventually overwhelmed and defeated in 1897; its two-third survived people were reduced to slaves and landless labor migrants. The Kingdom of Wolaita, under the brave king *Tonna*, harshly resisted the colonial power for over half a decade. The Arsi Oromo where the raids of *Atse* Menelik II were heartless and economically devastating,[22] in particular, resisted honorably. Their brave resistance kept the army of *Atse* Menelik II at bay for 6 years (Hamilton, 1936). Initially, they achieved several victories in many battles. The war was ended finally in the victory of the colonial army by mass killings of Oromo and the heinous savageries of cutting off the right arms of thousands of men and the breasts of thousands of female Oromo (see Jalata, 2005, p. 73) and massive scale mutilation[23] of the prisoners. In Harar, in January 1887, at the battle of *Calanqoo*, an Oromo resistance, together with its coalition of Harari and Somali resistance, was defeated. Though there were not large-scale armed resistances that took *Atse* Menelik II many years to break in most of the newly annexed territories and some small kingdoms submit peacefully securing some better-than-none deals, there were small-organized resistances to the colonial expansion everywhere in the colony countries.

The colonial expansion and annexation quadrupled the size of the core Kingdom of Abyssinia of the time. *Atse* Menelik II vastly expanded the Abyssinian kingdom into an Empire made of many kingdoms and traditional governments (see Figure 3).

Alexander Bulatovich[24] (1993) summarizes his first-hand experiences after expending four-month, from October to June 1897, with the army of *Atse* Menelik II under the command of *Ras* Wolde Giorgis[25] (1851-1918). Ras Wolde Giorgis was one of the generals of *Atse* Menelik II. He marched south to annex the territory between Shewa and Lake Rudolf on behalf of his master.

Bulatovich, as a summary of his first-hand experience as a member of the military expedition of the army of *Ras* Wolde Giorgis from Shewa to Lake Rudolf, "considered it necessary to say the following":

> By order of the emperor, a fifteen-thousand-man corps, in spite of the immense region over which it was quartered, concentrated incredibly quickly and set out on a campaign to annex to the realm of Ethiopia[Abyssinia] vast lands which lie to the south of it, which no one before this had explored, and which were completely unknown. In the course of just four months, this corps annexed to Abyssinia an area of just over 40,000 square versts [about 18,000 square miles]. Garrisons are posted in the newly conquered lands, and these regions should now be considered definitely lost for any other power which might have had pretensions on them. (Bulatovich, 1993, p. 14)

From this summary of an independent eye-witness Russian observer who was involved in the colonization with the Abyssinian army, it is clear that not only the annexation was so stress-free that such a vast country was annexed in just four months, but also these annexed territories and peoples were sovereign. It is also clear that the power of *Atse* Menelik II was to be reckoned with by the European colonialists who would have wished to make these territories their own not attempt to take these territories from him.

It took *Atse* Menelik II only the effort of affixing his seal to the expedition maps brought to him by leaders of his army and European explores accompanying his army and conquering the southern peoples for him to claim sovereignty over the newly "explored" and "occupied" territories (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 152). When the French explorer, M. Leon Darragon, conducted an expedition to the north of Lake Rudolf in 1897 through *Boorana* country with an army of 15,000 men submitted the map of his route to *Atse* Menelik II, who wasted no time to claim "sovereignty over all the countries named in it" (Budge, 1928, p. 533). Similarly, when Alexander Bulatovich conducted an expedition in 1898 on behalf of *Atse* Menelik II with an army of 30,000 men (the Army of *Ras* Walda Giorgis) to conquer countries to the south up to Lake Rudolf and returned to Addis Ababa claiming to have extended *Atse* Menelik II's kingdom as far as 3^0 latitude north of the Equator, *Atse* Menelik II immediately "proclaimed himself king of all the country" named in the expedition map of Bulatovich (Budge, 1928., pp. 533-534).

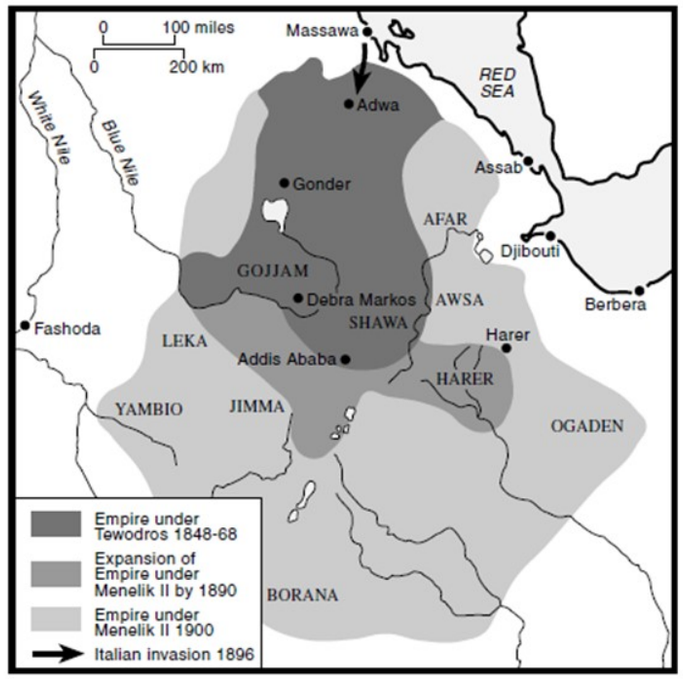

Figure 3: Gradual expansion of Abyssinia in the 19th century

Note. Kevin Shillington (Ed.) (2009). Encyclopedia of African History. Vol. I, A-G. Fitzroy Dearborn: London and New York. Page 503. © 2005 by Taylor & Francis Group.

Borders of modern Ethiopia were fixed post-Adwa Victory, between 1897 and 1908. *Atse* Menelik II succeeded in negotiating and demarcating almost the present boundary (except the boundary between Abyssinian-controlled Somali (Ogden) and Italian East Africa (southern Somalia)) with Great Britain, France, and Italy. As the culmination of his 5-9 years of the post-Adwa colonial enterprise in the south and southwest, Menelik signed the border treaties in the south and southwest with Great Britain in 1902 and 1903, respectively. The eastern borders, though some common understandings were established, would remain unmarked until the 1930s. The Afar and the Ogden people remained ignorant of which country they formally belonged to until the late 1930s (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 173). The same was true for the Gambella people regardless of the signed western border treaty.[26]

The "Colony Countries"

Introduction

Under *Atse* Menelik II, the "unification" project was known unambiguously as **አገር ማቅናት** (controlling and administering a country, supposedly for the better). Every newly controlled territory was known unambiguously as **ቅኝ አገር** (colony countries). In some instances, they were also referred to as **ቅኝ ግዛት** (colonial territory). Those who administer the colony countries were known as **ቅኝ ገዢ**, colonizers.

Some of these "colony countries" however were entrusted to their former leaders or to their heir-apparent for subordinate titular governance based on the strategic benefits of doing so for Abyssinian political and economic dominance and cultural homogenization based on the Abyssinian identity. Some of the titular governors even maintained their former title. They were, however, themselves and their peoples were subject to the colonial rule of the Empire. Their differences from other colony countries were that they were better only slightly under the uneven social, cultural, linguistic, political, and military repressions and economic exploitation of the absolute imperial power of the *Atse*.

Ironically,[27] *Atse* Menelik II, when he called his people to fight the war he declared against Italian colonial expansionist in 1896, characterized the Italian expansion from Eritrea into northern Abyssinia as *"* **የውጪ ቅኝ ገዢ**" *(foreign colonizer)*. By then, the *Atse* himself had succeeded in his colonization of many independent states and kingdoms to the south of his country, which he presumably considered as "internal colonization", or in his view colonization was perhaps only the one by the white people or those who come from outside of the continent.

Indeed, *Atse* Menelik II had another stately excuse for colonization: he was the military campaign to "reunify" the kingdom as if it had ever existed as such. This was the strategic propaganda laid down to warn off the European colonizers and to establish a buffer zone between his Kingdom of Abyssinia and the colonial territories of the French Somali Land (Djibouti), the British Somali Land (Somali Land), British East Africa (Kenya), Italian East Africa (Italian Somali Land and Eritrea) and British Sudan (Sudan). He finalized his colonization after his triumphant return as a result of his impressive and historic victory at the Battle of Adwa on the Italian colonial army.

The list in Table 1 shows the year or duration of conquest or submission of the respective kingdom or state or nation or people in the Ethiopian Federation during the reign of *Atse* Menelik II as *Atse* of Abyssinia.

Table 1: Some of the self-administering districts, regions, kingdoms, emirates, republican states were subjugated by the Kingdom of Abyssinia under the leadership of *Atse* Menelik II.

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Districts, regions, kingdoms, emirates, nations, nationalities, or peoples	Year/duration of subjugation
Shewa (Oromo)	1865
Jimma (Oromo)	1882
Alaba	1890
Mareko/Libido, Kembata	1891
Jangero, Kusha, Boroda,	1894
Afar, Saho	1896
Borena (Oromo), Gurafarda (Oromo), Gichara, Kosha, Gulidiya, Konso, Burji, Nuer, Anuak, Mazyanger	1897
Bako (Oromo), Geleb/Dasenech, Maji, Guba/Gumuz, Berta/Benishangul	1898
Wollo (Oromo)	1867-1876
Gurage	1875-1889
Hadiyya	1875-1890
Guma (Oromo)	1878-1882
Gomma (Oromo)	1878-1887
Limu-Enariya (Oromo), Gera (Oromo), Bencho	1879-1887
Tulema (Oromo)	1879-1982
Macha (Oromo), Wellega (Oromo), Arsi (Oromo)	1882-1886
Itu-Harar (Oromo) and Emirate of Harar (Aderie)	1885-1887
Bale (Oromo), Sidama, Gedeo	1890-1891
Bosha/Gano, Kaffa, Zara, Kullo, Konta, Wolaita	1890-1894
Ogaden, Isa	1890-1897
Gamo, Gofa	1894-1895

Note. Compiled from Edward Hamilton (1936). *The Wars in Abyssinia: A brief military history*. London: Unicorn Press, *Map of Abyssinia showing tribal boundaries* and Lapiso G. Delebo (1983 Eth.C.). **ኢትዬጵያ የጣሊያ ሥርዓትና ጅምር ካፒታሊዝም: *1900-1966*** (**ሁለተኛ መጽሐፍ**), Addis Ababa, Table 9, p. 94.

Atse Menelik II was able to conquer these nations, kingdoms, autonomous people, and republican states and confederacies that constitute more than two-thirds of his Abyssinian Kingdom almost within less than two decades. His empire-building "success" can only be primarily attributed to his military might and his European military and diplomatic advisers. Also, the personal ambitions of *Atse* Menelik II and his generals to build a matching empire, at any cost, that would compete with the European colonizers who were ever encircling the kingdom may have contributed to the success of the colonization project of the Kingdom of Abyssinia on one hand and the subjugation of many nations, nationalities, and peoples who were inhabiting the countries beyond the border of the kingdom in the south, southwest, east, and southeast.

These "colony countries", particularly those who loved their sovereignty so dearly and were so determined not to submit peacefully and hence went into the battle of the unequal with the mighty modern army of *Atse* Menelik II only to be defeated at live-or-die battles, suffered the most. Their defeat destroyed their political, social, religious, linguistic, and cultural identities. Tens of thousands of their military and civilian lives were lost. They were exposed to the unbridled exploitation of their human and material resources. Some of their peoples were subject to slavery and sold to slave traders in thousands. The *Atse* and Abyssinian *naftagna* elites kept some others as domestic slaves.

By the beginning of the 20th century, *Atse* Menelik II and *Etege* Tayitu jointly owned 70,000 slaves while *Ras* Welde Giorgis had 20,000 (Pankhurst, 1968, pp. 75, 120). The elite nobility owned thousands and some of them even up to tens of thousands of slaves (Zewdie, 1991, p. 93). The feudal aristocrats made slavery and slave trade the main sustainer of their socio-economic life. They turned a third of the population of the country into a slave. According to estimation by long-term imperial court physician during the reign of *Atse* Menelik II, Dr. Paul Merab, roughly thirty-three percent of the population of Addis Ababa, as well the whole country was slaves (Delebo, 1983 Eth. C., p. 39).

The colonized peoples lost their livelihoods, including the right to own land and other natural resources. The *Atse* allocated their land to his alien generals, appointed officials, and soldiers with an extended right unmatched with the practice in the core Abyssinian territories (the territory of most of the present Amhara State and Tigray states) where the peasants held substantial rights to the land. The indigenous colony people were deprived of their right to land except for few exceptions. Their land now belonged to the *Atse* and the Abyssinian Orthodox *Tewahdo* Church. The church was comfortably entitled to one-third of the land of the colony countries. The people of the "colony countries" lost their political and cultural identities to the imposed Abyssinian identity. In some cases, they were forced directly and systematically to religious

conversion. Moreover, they fall under the superimposition of the new Abyssinian *nafxanyaa-Gabbar* system of political and land administration.

Martial de Salviac summarizes the manner and character of the invading Abyssinian army during the southern marches of *Atse* Menelik II. He states:

> The conduct of the Abyssinian armies invading a land is simply barbaric. They contrive a sudden irruption, more often at night. At daybreak, the fire begins; surprised men in the huts or in the fields are three quarters massacred and horribly mutilated; the women and the children and many men are reduced to captivity; the soldiers lead the frightened herds toward the camp, take away their grain and flour which they load on the shoulders of their prisoners spurred on by blows of the whip, destroy the harvest, then, glutted with booty and intoxicated with blood, go to walk a bit further from the devastation. That is what they call 'civilizing a land.' (de Salviac cited in Asafa Jalata, 2010, pp. 1-2 and Mahadallah, 2013, p. 53)

However, *Atse* Menelik II's rule of the conquered was not homogenous. Those who submitted peacefully were able to negotiate some momentary local autonomy and promises of self-administration. However, the Abyssinian regional political governors, *Rases*, and the *Atse* started to erode both the local autonomy and the promise after the consolidation of power in every corner of the new empire. Only a few such local "autonomy" would survive the era of *Atse* Menelik II.

The following extended quote summarizes the reality that the southern NNPs had to face after the institutionalization of settler colonization among them by the people from the north.

> The occupation at the end of the last century by the Amhara and the annexation of all Southern Ethiopia by the Ethiopian Empire of Menilek and his successors put not only an end to the political independence of the people in question. This was also a radical interference with their economic and cultural development the total effects of which can hardly be overestimated. Firstly, the exasperated wars, which the Southern Ethiopians often waged in order to regain their freedom, decimated drastically their number. Since the losses affected above all the grownup male population, the economic productiveness sank considerably. Still more negative was the effect of the permanent oppression by the Amhara occupants. The "gabbàr system" was introduced nearly everywhere. It meant that the entire native population of the South was attached to the occupation army as a kind of "state serfs." A certain number of peasants with their families had to

> provide specified soldiers or officers according to a fixed rate. Though the tributes were laid down officially, oppression and arbitrariness became nevertheless the rule. Until 1935 when the gabbàr system was abolished by the Italian authorities, the lives of most Southern Ethiopians were exposed to a permanent constraint which rendered economic or cultural progress impossible. The splendid development initiated by the foundation of the Southern Ethiopian states since the beginning of the 17th century, which led to attaining a remarkable level of culture, was interrupted abruptly. (Haberland, 1981, p. 747)

The political histories of the nations that *Atse* Menelik II conquered and annexed have been excluded from the historiography of the Empire of Abyssinia (and the Empire of Ethiopia). These undoubtedly had an enormous impact on the suppression of their political, cultural, and social institutions. It has only been since very recently that some critical scholarship about these nations, peoples, and cultures started to emerge and challenge the historiographical injustices. Here, I offer very summaries of the political history of some of these nations with the objective of shading some light into the background of some of the NNPs who inhabited the Horn of Africa region before the formation of the Empire of Abyssinia and the Ethiopian Federation in the last decades of 19th and 20th centuries respectively.

It should be made clear, however, that it would not be, in any way, a complete description of the political history of these NNPs (colony countries). The attempt is to only illustrate, taking the example of some of the formerly independent NNPs, how they became subjects of the Kingdom of Abyssinia after facing military defeat during the last decades of the 19th century. Presenting a comprehensive political history of each NNP would require an independent in-depth study as many as the number of NNPs, which is neither within the objective nor within the scope of this study.

Kingdom of Kaffa

The Kingdom of Kaffa was one of the well-established and historic kingdoms. The date of its foundation is not known. It probably emerged at the end of the 14th century in present south-western Ethiopia. At some time in its history, it was a tributary to the Kingdom of Abyssinia, and some of its people had accepted Christianity. Particularly since the weakening of the Kingdom of Abyssinia in the 17th century, it had remained one of the strongest kingdoms in the region until the end of the 19th century, when it was conquered

by *Atse* Menelik II and forcefully made part of the Empire of Abyssinia. Presently, Kaffa is one of the administrative Zones of SNNPs.

Huntingford (1955, pp. 116-127) provides one of the reasonably detailed descriptions of the political structure of the Kingdom of Kaffa. As said by Huntingford, the kingdom had weld-defended frontiers both by man-made and natural defenses. Its Kafinno kings were called "Kaffa kings;" not kings of Kaffa. They were hereditary and had the title *tato* but sometimes referred to as *adi*. The coronation of the kings used to take place at the hill of Sadda where sub-kings of the sub-tribes swear allegiance to him. The kings had many political functions and held the ultimate power in addition to be an embodiment of the spirit of Kaffa religion, *eqqo* of which *Doccho* was said to be the greatest. As a result, the Kaffa kings were believed to be able to ultimately ascend to the sky-God. In his court, a Kaffa king had four throne guards, seven advisors, a master of ceremonies, a private treasurer, a cook, a builder, a commander of the guards, a controller of king's slaves, and a commander of the guard of the royal enclosure. Kaffa kings administered the kingdom assisted with the council of seven great counsellors. The kingdom was divided into provinces, numbering from 12 to18 at separate times, and sub-provinces to which the king appointed governors. In the 1890s, it had twelve semi-autonomous provinces (*Warafo*) with their own governors (*Rasha*) and sub-province appointees. The king ruled with the support of a seven-person council (*Mikrecho*) who represents seven clans (*Tomo*).

The kingdom was one of the oldest Cushitic kingdoms in the Gibie region that were gradually conquered and annexed to the Abyssinian kingdom during 1880-1899 (Tafla, 1987, p. 932). The Kingdom of Abyssinia conquered the kingdom of Kaffa after several attempts. The first attempt to conquer the kingdom was initiated by *Atse* Yohannes IV (r. 1872-1889) when he encouraged Tekle Haimanot, the king of Gojjam, to subdue and govern Kaffa as part of his kingdom of Gojjam. Menelik II made the second attempt during his expedition to the south and south-west of Abyssinia (Bulatovich, 1993). *Ras* Gobana Dacci tried, though unsuccessfully the first time, to subdue Kaffa. Similarly, the first attempt by *Ras* Wolde Giorgis, who was appointed[28] as king of Kaffa ahead of the battle of conquest, also failed. The *Ras* was however successful on his second attempt. The contingent army of *Atse* Menelik under the supreme command of *Ras* Welde Giorgis II divided into two under the leadership of *Ras* Tesemma and *Dajazmach* Demisew finally succeeded in breaking the defense of the kingdom.

The decisive conquest of the kingdom took place in 1897 (Huntingford, 1955, p. 124) when the army of *Atse* Menelik II captured the last king of Kaffa,[29] *Gaki Sheroch* (r. 1890-1897), also known as *Tato* Chinito Galito, after nine months of resistance. Overwhelmed by the modern army and modern

weapons, the Kaffino avoided conventional warfare and resorted to a guerrilla strategy that helped the kingdom to resist the Abyssinian onslaught for nine long months. The young king had no large standing army. The standing fighting forces of the kingdom were a small protection army held by the king, his councilors, and each of the provincial governors and district chiefs that were called for war (Huntingford, 1955, p. 126). It was no match in the number of soldiers or weapons to the colonial army. *Ras* Wolde Giorgis dispatched a large army, larger than that Italy had dispatched to conquer Abyssinia at the battle of Adwa, to subdue the kingdom of Kaffa[30]. The small army of the kingdom, however, gave the Abyssinian army a formidable resistance and the battle was reported to have been one of the heavy ones that *Atse* Menelik's colonial army faced in the south. Finally, Gaki Sheroch was wounded and captured. According to Huntingford (1955, p. 105), the king was taken prisoner on 18 September 1897 and sent first to Ankober then to Addis Ababa. He died in Addis Ababa on 10 September 1919, aged 54. He was the 19th king of the Menjo Dynasty, The dynasty was said to have ruled Kaffa since the 15th century but by the end of the 19th century, after an estimated loss of three-quarters of its citizens to the anti-colonial war, it was no more.

The Kingdom of Kaffa became a feudal state ruled by appointees of the Abyssinian monarch by the title *Dajazmach* that led to the marginalization of the Kaffino people in their own country. In the immediate aftermath of the conquest of the kingdom, the Abyssinians started to settle in large numbers. The seat of the *Dajazmach* was initially at *Anderacha* but later moved to *Sharadda*. The settlement of the Abyssinians and other peoples increased rapidly in the urban centers of Kaffa. The Kaffino people gradually started to be marginalized in every aspect of life in their kingdom, particularly in urban settlements. Huntingford notes: forty years after the conquest, in 1938, the capital of Kaffa, Bonga, had a population of less than seven percent Kaffinno, the rest being new settlers from Abyssinia and the neighboring peoples.

Kingdom of Wolaita

An Omotic kingdom between Omo River in the west, Lake Abyata in the south, and Blate River in the east, and Kambata in the north (Tafla, 1987, p. 989). After the formation of the Ethiopian Federation in 1995, the kingdom is structured as one of the Zones of the SNNP State. Hadiya and Kembata-Tembaro Zones border the Wolaita Zone in the north, by Gamo Gofa Zone and Arsi Zone (of Oromia State) in the south, by Sidama Zone in the east and by Dawro Zone in the west.

The kingdom was formed during the 12th–13th centuries through migration and integration (Tariku, 2015). Tariku (2015) explains that the kingdom had a hierarchy of political authority and territorial administration along with its corresponding socio-political assemblies. The political hierarchy runs from *Kawo* (King) to *Sangadana* to *Uduga* to *Uduma*. The territorial hierarchy was typically modern. The kingdom had a district, a country (county), a "compound" (locality), and a "family" (neighborhood). The highest assembly is the general assembly followed by *Shilota* (district assembly), *Abalia* (county assembly), *Shcha chima* (locality assembly), and *Dubsha* (assembly of the family).

By the mid-19th century, the Kingdom of Wolaita was one of the most fiercely defended kingdoms in the region. It took the army of *Atse* Menelik II over five years to break its defenses. In its self-defense, the Wolaita warriors employed many innovative military strategies, including biological strategy. Infecting the enemy camp with smallpox through the selective surrendering of warriors and employing stunt strategy of galloping into the enemy camp and open dropping beehives full of fierce bees. The latter bio-warfare tactics worked well in disturbing the enemy camp temporarily and allowing the Wolaita warriors to take advantage of it for precipitous attacks. Also, it employed booby-traps and dip dug ditches. The main tactic was, however, guerrilla warfare. They ambushed the Abyssinian army while it was on the move. Their traditional weapons and training were, however, inferior. They were armed with arch bows, spears, swords, and other traditional battle tools. In contrast, the army of Menelik II was armed with firearms and canons, and it was trained by European military trainers. At the time of Abyssinian aggression at the beginning of the last decade of the 19th century, the traditional defense system of King Tona finally gave up, and the Wolaita warriors had to face the battle of unequal.

The war between the Kingdom of Wolaita and the Kingdom of Abyssinia was one of the deadliest. According to oral traditions, 208,000 people died in the battles: 118,000 from the kingdom and the remainder 90,000 from Menelik II's army during the war (Vaughan, 2003). This, however, could be an exaggeration. The deadliest of all the battles of the war was the last battle. Raymond Jones (2013) provides a reasonable number of deaths. He notes that *Atse* Menelik II admitted that 18,000 Wolaita people were dead or taken captive during the decisive last battle. The contemporary historians however recorded 18,987 deaths. Vanderheim, the French business diplomat who was with *Atse* Menelik II's army in person agrees that the death was less than the mentioned figure. In addition to the death of the soldiers and civilians, over 15,000 soldiers of the king of Wolaita were taken captive and brought to Addis Ababa (Entoto) to a life of slavery. They were kept in custody until the leaders and soldiers of Menelik II's army shared them among themselves as a prize.

In the last overwhelming battle, the fiercely resisting king was captured with regret. At the time when he ordered the last expedition to the Kingdom of Wolaita, *Atse* Menelik II had a modern army, the largest of its kind in East Africa, equipped with firearms and cannons (Jones, 2013, p. 65). For the small traditional army of King Tona, this was too much. Nevertheless, encouraged with the historical resistance and victory of the Walaita-Gamo people on the mighty army of Ahmed Gragn under the leadership of Wazir Mujahidin in 1532 (Delebo, 1982 Eth. C. p. 139), the army, the people, and the king fought the anti-colonial war gallantly until they were finally totally overpowered. Upon his capture and comprehension of the scale of the human and economic obliteration, King Tona regretted by openly admitting that he was the wrong in placing his honor first and bringing the destruction of his country and the massacre of his people. He wished that he had submitted peacefully and or himself dead instead of his people.

The capture of King Tona was an enormous success for Menelik who portrayed his war against the Kingdom of Wolaita as a holy war for converting the people from Islam back to Christianity. The war propaganda was that the Wolaita people were Christians before they were converted to Islam during the "invasion" and rule of Ahmed Gragn from 1529-1543. On the contrary, as mentioned above, the Wolaita people were known for their resistance to Graign and they were not compelled to become Muslims during his time.

Nonetheless, the victory did not result only in the conversion of most of the Wolaita people from Islam to Christianity but also in making the Christian Kingdom, particularly Menelik II, much richer and more feared. Menelik personally took the lion's share of the wealth amassed from the Kingdom of Wolaita. He took half of the 35,000 cattle and 1,800 of the 18,000 captives (Jones, 2013). He had a cross mark tattooed, with fire, on the arms of his share of the captives (Jones, 2013) as the brand of his private property. The soldiers in the army of Menelik II, on their part, looted anything of value, from cabbage to horses and mules, from Wolaita people according to the records of the French eyewitness, Vanderheim, who had come to Shewa in 1884 as a delegate of French merchants (Jones, 2015).

The war devastated the former Kingdom of Wolaita became the colony country of the Kingdom of Abyssinia. The news of the destruction and the death of thousands of lives, including women and children, and the enslavement of tens of thousands of people, however, did not stay in Abyssinia. Raymond Jones (2013) (our translation from Amharic by Muluken Tariku) explains the reaction in Europe and the counter-reaction from Addis Ababa. The news of the very devastating war reached Europe through the journalistic work of Vanderheim and appeared in many newspapers. Most of all, the act of sharing war captives as slaves among the army of Menelik II

caught the attention of Europeans. Soon it ignited a debate whether the European prohibition of slavery includes war prisoners, domestic workers, and Muslims. *Atse* Menelik II, by employing the service of Mondon, responded to the report by Vanderheim presenting the military expedition to the Kingdom of Wolaita as just war from the point of view of religion and history. The propaganda response report by Mondon, an excerpt, claimed that:

> Before several centuries ago, the Kingdom of Wolaita was part of the Kingdom of Abyssinia. The Wolaita people, withstand centuries of the imposition of Islam, have maintained their Christian culture. The expedition of Menelik was not a cruel invasion but a reunification of former territory and a holy act of protecting Christianity. In the campaign, where the 'cross' has shown its supremacy over the 'moon' (crescent), the kingdom that had been separated from its motherland had been returned to Christian rule. Thanks to Remington and Gras rifles, the force crushed a force. (Jones, 2013, p. 71) [Translation from Amharic translation by Muluken Tariku]

This kind of failed argument to justify the colonization projects of *Atse* Menelik II, based on the cover-up propaganda of the colonialist expansion of the kingdom, remained effective not only to convince or to confuse Christian Europe but also to set a whole new precedence for the rewriting of the history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia as the history of modern Ethiopia. Using the nomenclature of the former geographical designation of a very large territory in the east and northeast Africa by the ancient name "Ethiopia" and the official replacement of the name "Abyssinia" with "Ethiopia" in 1931, some Abyssinian elites and Ethiopian-ist historians would latter continue to claim opportunistically that even territories which are not now in Ethiopia were also part of the Kingdom of Abyssinia.

Kingdom of Hadiya

The Hadiya people established the Islamic "kingdom" of Hadiya. The date of its establishment is not known. It existed in the 13th century CE according to Abyssinian records. Kemiso and Handamo (2010, pp. 18-20), however, argue that the Hadiyya Islamic Kingdom was established during 10-12th century CE by the Hadiyya people who have had contact with Arabia while they were inhabiting the northern and central Abyssinia (southern Tigray and Wello) few centuries before they moved further south to the present Hadiyya Zone in the SNNP State.

According to Kemiso and Handamo (2010, pp. 18-20, 55-57), the Hadiyya people finally settled in their present region during the mid-17th century to the late 19th century. This was after traversing most of the eastern escarpment of the central Ethiopian mountainous region east of the Great East African Rift valley and central Ethiopian plateau. During their historic movements, they were grouped into several *Güchchuwwa* (clans), and they arrived at the present destination from multiple directions.

Contrary to the quite common Abyssinian portrayal of the political administration of the Hadiyya people as a kingdom, the Hadiyya had no Abyssinian-style monarchy. Kemiso and Handamo (2010, pp. 114-119) explain that the Hadiyya people had elected political leaders and hereditary spiritual leaders who checked and balanced each other. The Hadiyya had an egalitarian political system where able men are elected based on merits by the people to the top political leadership known as *Garaad*. The *Garaad* may be elected from any of the clans. The Hadiyya had a traditional constitution (*Seera*) that guides the office of the *Garaad* and other elected leaders. All important public decisions were made by the assembly of representatives (*Dummichcha*) who come from every clan. The political administration was in check and balance with spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership was for life. Spiritual leaders were known as *Anjaancho*. The *Anjaancho* led the spiritual life of the Hadiya. *Anjaancho* was a hereditary title limited to a "big family." It passes from one family member to another upon the death of the active leader. Using the two pillars of power, political and spiritual, the Hadiyya remained an effective independent nation for most of its history.

The Islamic kingdom had a challenging relationship with the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia. Kemiso and Handamo (2010, pp. 23-31), based on chronicles of the *Atses* of the Kingdom of Abyssinia, Abyssinian history, and a record of the campaign of Ahmad Gragn in the region, explain at length the intermittent war-peace relationship from a 14th-17th century between the Islamic Kingdom of Hadiyya and the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia. The peaceful relationship broke during the reign of *Atse* Amde Tsion (r. 1314-1344). The *Atse* waged war on the Kingdom of Hadiyya for the first time in the mid-1320s. He caused a "great massacre" during the battle. He also relocated the subjected Hadiyya people. After the conquest, Hadiya became a tributary to the Christian kingdom. The Hadiya people however repeatedly revolted against the Abyssinian Christian Kingdom. The warring relationship continued during the reign of *Atse* Dawit I (r. 1382-1413) and during the reign of *Atse* Yishak (r. 1414-1429). The Islamic Kingdom of Hadiya paid tribute to the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia from the 1320s to the 1430s but maintained its self-rule and its autonomy. Soon the Hadiyya people revolted against the Christian kingdom and prepared for a war of liberation. However,

because of the division between the leaders of the Hadiyya people, Hadiyya *Garaad* Maheko and Gadayato *Garaad* (Baamo) that *Atse* Zer'a Yako effectively exploited, the Christian Kingdom was successful in winning the battle and containing the upheaval. The Hadiya people came under the total control of the Christian Kingdom during the reign of *Atse* Zer'a Yakob (r. 1434-1468) after he had, cooperating with *Garaad* Baamo, defeated *Garaad* Maheko and his allies Hadiyya *Garaad*s (Garaads of Gudella, Diho, Hayiba, Genz, Sega, Gebeb, Kebena, Gogala/Dodola, and Halaba) and settled military colonist (*Chewa*) in Hadiyya country. Yet, the control of the Christian kingdom on the Islamic kingdom was not secured because of continued revolts. *Atse* Zer'a Yaekob, to cement this victory over the people of Hadiyya, married the daughter of *Garaad* Mahammed, Eleni, after she had converted to Christianity. The political marriage, however, could not earn the trust of the Hadiyya people for the Christian kingdom. In 1531, the kingdom joined the Jihad campaign of Ahmed Gragn against the Christian Kingdom. It became free from any influence of the Christian kingdom from 1531-1543. In 1544 *Atse* Gelawdewos was able to take back the kingdom after the death of Ahmed Gragn. Nevertheless, after the death of the *Atse* Gelawdewos in 1559, the Kingdom of Hadiyya became free of the influence of the Christian Kingdom once again. *Atse* Sertse Dengel (r. 1563-1597) of the Christian kingdom conducted several campaigns to subdue the Hadiyya people. The *Atse* was able to defeat the kingdom after it revolted against the Abyssinian kingdom under the leadership of *Garaad* Hatse from 1568 – 1570. The Hadiya people continued to revolt. The *Atse* once again had to crush a rebellion of the Hadiyya people under the leadership of Jafer in 1577 and took the title of *Garaad* for himself. The non-stopping revolt of the Hadiyya people continued. The subsequent *Atses*, *Atse* Ya'ekob, and *Atse* Susenyos campaigned against the Hadiyya people. *Atse* Susenyos (r. 1607-1632) had a major battle with the Hadiyya Kingdom under the leadership of *Garaad* Sidi, who was able to form an allied front from the armies of the neighboring nations against the Christian Kingdom, where the latter had inconclusive victory.

The Oromo broke the cycle of protracted war-peace relationship between the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia and the Islamic kingdom of Hadiyya in the mid-16th century. The offensive-defense of the Oromo against the Christian Kingdom of Abyssinia and the Islamic Sultanates and Kingdoms that started in the early 16th century probably gave the longest respite from war to the kingdom of Hadiyya. The neutralization of both the Christian and Muslim forces by the Oromo during *Gadaa Michillee* (1554–1562) and the subsequent hegemony of the Oromo in the region left the Hadiyya to their internal conflicts, inter *Güchicho* wars. The attacks by *Atse* Susenyos were aided by the sections of the frontier Oromo communities who took side with the *Atse*.

These Oromo considered him one of them and their leader because he was adopted by them.

The hegemony of the Oromo in the region had some demographic and geographic consequences to the Hadiyya people. During the two centuries that followed the major offensive-defenses of the Oromo, in the 17th and 18th centuries, some of the Hadiyya people were said to have become Oromo, mainly in the present Arsi Zones of Oromia State. They became Oromo through *moggaasaa* (an ethnographic social integration) for the obvious benefits of safety and protection. During the same time, according to Hadiyya oral traditions, most of the Hadiyya clans moved to their present domicile. According to Kemiso and Handamo (2010, pp. 55-57), the arrival of the clans to their respective districts in the present Hadiyya Zone and the neighboring Zones and Districts, also based mainly on oral tradition, is dated between 16th and 19th centuries: Bade'ooso in 1870, Leemo during 1760-1900, Shaashoogo in 1770, Hadiyya and Sooro during 1760-1800, Libido or Maaraqo starting from 16th century, Qabeena in 1860, Alaaba in 1825.

The Hadiya people were able to enjoy relative peace and rebuild their traditional government in the 17th, 18th, and first half of the 19th centuries. This was when the Oromo kept the Christian Kingdom at bay from the Hadiyya and other peoples in the south. The Oromo pushed back the Kingdom into the most northerly region where it established its capital at Gondar. The northern Oromo infiltrated the reduced kingdom until they finally became its masters. During this time, the Oromo held political supremacy in the central Horn of Africa region.

After the decline of the Oromo power in the Abyssinian Kingdom starting from the mid-19th century, however, the state of affairs of Hadiyya people and other southern people started to change. The re-emergence of the powerful Christian Kingdom under the Shewan King, *Nəgus* Menelik, threatened the autonomy and independence of many of the southern NNPs. Soon, Hadiyya faced the colonial expedition of the Shewan *Nəgus* and was defeated.

Defeating Hadiyya was not easy for *Nəgus* Menelik. Kemiso and Handamo (2010, pp. 68-70) explain that *Nəgus*, (later *Atse*) Menelik fought several battles with the Hadiyya clans before he was able to appoint his governor in place of the Hadiyya *Garaads*. Menelik employed the military tactic of attacking the Hdiyya *Giichchuwwa* separately for an easy win. However, some of the *Giichcho*, *Qabeena,* and *Hadiya*, for example, resisted forcefully the invasion of Menelik. The *Qabeena Giichcho* of the Hadiyya people stood up to the campaign of *Nəgus* Menelik II in 1875 being under the leadership of Umar Beqsa. Nevertheless, their leader peacefully submitted to Menelik, rewarded the Abyssinian title of *Grazmach*, and became the local leader under the suzerainty of the Kingdom of Shewa of *Nəgus* Menelik until Hasen Enjamo forcefully removed him. Hasen

Enjamo, in addition to declaring Jihad against the Christian kingdom in the district, organize the Qabena army and led it in the war against *Dajazmach* Welde Ashagrie, *Atse* Menelik II's general and appointed governor of Gruagie and Sodo, in 1885. Nevertheless, according to Kemiso and Handamo (2010, pp. 70-73), the war between Qabena *Giichcho* and *Atse* Menelik II continued until 1889, until when the Hadiyya were defeated finally. During this time, two significant battles were fought: the battle of Wilinqo in 1888 in which the Qabena were victorious and the battle of Jebdu in 1889 in which the Christian army was victorious (Kemiso and Handamo, 2010). According to Kemiso and Handamo, the final decisive battle, the battle of Jebdu, was fought between the imperial invading army of *Aste* Menelik II and the self-defending allied army organized from various districts of Gurage and Hadiya. The two most powerful Oromo generals in the Imperial army, *Ras* Gobena Dacce and *Fitawrari* (later *Ras*) Habte Giorgis Dinagde led the imperial army. Hasen Enjamo was the commander in chief of the allied armies who also had their leaders.

The victory of the invading imperial army on the allied minorities of Hadiyya clans (*Giichchuwwa*) and some other peoples in the region gave *Atse* Menelik II consecutive victories over the other Hadiyya Giichchuwwa (Kemiso and Handamo, 2010, pp. 76-81). Accordingly, Shaashoogoo, which was subdued by *Ras* Gobana in 1886 and left to the local leadership of Abbaa *Gadaa* Geedo Bashiiro but revolted and remained free until the subjugation of Qabena in 1889, was retaken in 1892 by the colonial armies led by *Dajazmach* Welde Ashagrie and *Dajazmach* Wedajo Gobana (son of *Ras* Gobana Dacce). The Leemo and Badogo were taken by the second expedition led by *Dejazmach* Welde Ashagrie in 1891 when the Leemo Gaarad, Orse Bibiso, submitted peacefully and became *balabat*. The army of Welde Ashagrie subjugated Sooro, after strong resistance under its leaders, Agaago and Daddaachcha Yaarshee, probably in 1892. Baadawwaachcho was the last Hadiyya *Giichcho* to surrender to the imperial army of *Atse* Menelik II in 1894, after many heroic battles of resistance, together with the Kingdom of Wolaita.

These conservative victories of the invading imperial army from 1886-1894 effectively placed the Hadiyya people under the colonial rule of the Abyssinian Kingdom. Like other colonized nations, Hadiyya became part of the "colony countries" of the Empire of Abyssinia built by *Atse* Menelik II.

The Kingdom/State of Sidama

The Sidama have been referred to with varying names both by scholars and by the Abyssinian elites. The most recent one is the term Sidamo. Hameso

(2006) explains that the name Sidamo was imposed by Abyssinian rulers. It was meant to represent the Sidama nation while it is "no more than a geographical description given to a southern region that includes Sidama, Borana, Gedeo, Burji, and Walayta nations" (Hameso, 2006, p. 58). In scholarly works, it is used to describe the Cushitic-speaking people of southern Ethiopia which includes Sidama, Hadiyy, Kambata, Alaba, Gedeo, Bambala, Kaffa, and Janjero (Yemma/Yangaro) (Hameso, 2006).

The Sidama nation is built by one of the ancient peoples who lived in the Horn of Africa. The nation has been through significant population movements in central Ethiopia. It developed gradually the concept of belonging to the Sidama country, which is bordered presently with Oromia State in the northeast, Wolaita in the west, Gedeo in the south. The Abyssinians knew the Kingdom of Sidama through its legendary king, Motalemi, who allegedly lived in the 13th century and was said to have invaded Shewa, (Tafla, 1987, p. 951).

The Sidama state was one of the well-established states in present south-central Ethiopia. The Sidama nation is believed to have established a political administration from groups of small principalities as early as the 9th century CE. The principalities were ruled by elected and appointed council of local elders known as *Moote, Gadana,* and *Woma* until the conquest of the Sidama country by the Kingdom of Abyssinia at the end of the 19th century (Rike, 2014, p. 71).

Atse Menelik II of Abyssinia conquered Sidama land in 1893 (Hameso, 2006). The conquest began with the smaller force led by *Dajazmach* Bashah Aboye from near Alaba in 1889. However, though disconcerted, the resistance from some sections of the Sidama people could not let the *Dajazmach* subdue the Sidama until 1891 when *Ras* Leulseged came with a larger army and conquered the Sidama people (Tsehay, 1969, cited in Rike, 2014). Politically, the conquest resulted in "promotion of authoritarian value and the demotion of the Sidama system of governance [...] that have egalitarian and consultative decision-making principles in common with that of Oromo" (Hameso, 2004, p. 167). In other words, it resulted in the Sidama country being part of the Abyssinian kingdom and ruled by the imperial authoritarian system. The brutal *nafxanyaa–gabbar* system was introduced and garrison towns became the centers of imperial rule. The Sidama people became subjects and the Sidama country became one of the colony countries of the Kingdom of Abyssinia.

Kingdom of Denakil

The Kingdom of Denakil was located in the Horn of Africa region commonly known as the Afar triangle. The triangle is part of the Great East African Rift valley. It is a lowland, arid, and less hospitable region but rich in minerals and salt. The triangle includes the Afar State and northern districts of Somali State of Ethiopian Federation, southeastern Eritrea, Djibouti, and northern Somalia. Most of the triangle however now belongs to the Afar State. The state has maintained roughly a triangular shape. It is bordered by Tigray and Amhara states in the west, the State of Eritrea in the north, the Republic of Djibouti, State of Eritrea, and Somali state in the east, and Somali and Oromia States in the south.

The Afar are known with the names Adal, Adali, Oda'ali, in Amhara, Afaan Oromo and Somali respectively which "sounds the same as the ancestor of the dynasty and the son of Hadal Mahis, Ado'ali (Afar: white Ali)" (Yasin, 2008, p. 41). The Arabs gave them the name Denakil in connection to the historic commercial contacts between Arabian sailors and the Dankali clan located around Baylul that ruled the Kingdom of Dankali from the 15th to the 17th century (Yasin, 2008, p. 41). The Kingdom of Afar is now a divided country among three East African nations: Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. The emphasis here will be on the part of the Afar Kingdom, the larger part of which now belongs to the Ethiopian Federation.

The relationship of the Kingdom of Denakil with its neighbors (the Abyssinian Kingdom, the Oromo nation, and the Somali nation) has been both friendly and hostile. The Amhara and Tigre nations of the Abyssinian Kingdom tried to assert their dominance and political supremacy over the Afars through their long history. The Afars, through their traditional clan leadership, resisted the Abyssinian imposition of political supremacy and maintained their independence for most of their history. They, however, have had frequent clashes with their Tigrie and Amhara highland neighbors. The Afar and the Oromo, the two closely related Kushite nations, came into a confrontation after the 16th-century offensive defense of the Oromo. The Oromo drove the Afar out of most of the Awash Valley region. The confrontation between the Oromo and the Afar over scarce natural resources at traditional borders remained sporadic until recently. The Afar and the Isaa clan of Somali had been united historically under *Ahmad Gragn* in the 16th century. The two, however, have remained historical competitors in the region and clashes are widespread even today.

There are two competing historical perspectives on the independence of the kingdom of Denakil. From the perspective of some of the historians of the Kingdom of Abyssinia, the Kingdom of Denakil was a historical part of

Abyssinia. These Ethiopia-nist historians argue that the Sultanate had been part of the Abyssinian kingdom except during intermittent revolts of its traditional leaders. The latter incorporation of the Awsa Sultanate into the kingdom, therefore, was understood as "reunification." The Afar people, however, hold a distinct perspective. They hold that the so-called "reunification" was indeed an annexation of the independent Sultanate of Awsa by the Kingdom of Abyssinia. They claim that historically Afar was an independent kingdom until its incomplete conquest in the early decades of the 20th century by the Abyssinian kingdom.

Many historical accounts support the latter perspective. First, "the Afars have a tradition of state-building and since the fourteenth century four sultanates – Tadjourah, Rahaïta, Awsa, and Gobaad – have emerged among them" (Dubois, 2005, p. 359). Second, the Kingdom of Afar historically defended itself from foreign incursions on multiple occasions. It fended off the Turks in the mid-19th century, for example. Third, it stopped the Egyptians in 1875 from crossing through their land to highland Abyssinia. *Muhammad Anfare*, the ruler of Awsa from 1862-1902 obstructed an Egyptian invasion led by Albert Werner Munzinger[31] in 1875. The target of the Egyptians was further inland. Egypt had an intention to occupy the highland Abyssinia. Fourth, it resisted the repeated temptations of colonial France from expanding into their land from the north of Obok. Fifth, Afar had a traditional political system that was recognized by France in the 1860s. "Treaty of Paris of March 1862, signed by an Afar representative and the French minister of foreign affairs, which recognized a French coastal *zone* to the north of Obock in exchange for a payment of 10,000 thalers" (Dubois, 2005, p. 359) is a proof of the sovereignty of the Afar during the time. Sixth, it independently resisted the incursion of Italy from the coastal region of Eritrea from the 1880s to the early decades of the 20th century.

Also, contrary to the perspective of the Kingdom of Abyssinia that considered the Afar nation as always been part of Ethiopia, Adou (1993 cited in Yasin, 2008, p. 45) argues, "The Afar people had an independent traditional political system, which possessed clearly defined geographic boundaries" where "they had overall control of trade activities and imposed tax on caravans carrying goods across the Afarland to and from the Red Sea". Besides, Yasin (2008) argues that the claim that the Afar nation was independent could be supported by historical events, where the Awsa Sultanate (the Kingdom of Denakil, i.e., the kingdom of the Afar nation) extended its protection to two embattled Abyssinian royals:

> In the 1860s, while Kassa Mercha of Tigray, the future Emperor Yohannes IV, rebelled against Emperor Tewodros, he lived in exile among other places in Kala Ab'ala (northern Afar land)

> where the Herto leader Yakumi Sere' Ali assured him security against any threat from the highland. Similarly, in 1916, the Awsean Sultan Yayyo Mohammed granted protection to Lej Eyasu during his escape from the Shoan leaders. These incidents could strongly support the claim that the Afar was independent polity. (Yasin, 2008, p. 45)

Despite the Abyssinian recent claim that the kingdom of Denakil had been part of the Kingdom of Abyssinia, many historical records confirm that was not always the case. The claim is motivated rather by the expansionist ideology that the Christian Abyssinian kings maintained for many centuries and the relatively recent competitive claim during the late 19th century in its attempt to annex as much territory as possible competing with European colonizers. Historically, the Kingdom of Abyssinia was a Christian state. The Kingdom of Denakil, on the other hand, was a Muslim Sultanate. It is however admissible that the two had a good relationship during most of their independent co-existence. The highland Kingdom of Abyssinia depended much on the lowland Sultanate of Denakil (Awsa) for its salt (also a currency in the form of bars called *amole* in the Kingdom of Abyssinia for centuries) and its trade at the seaboard.

The Kingdom of Denakil and the Kingdom of Abyssinia remained in a cordial relationship until in 1894-1896, when *Atse* Menelik invaded the Muslim Kingdom, then known as Sultanate of Awsa. Muhammad Anfare resisted the invasion. He, however, submitted peacefully with an arranged relation where the internal administration of the Sultanate remained in the hands of its people. From 1896 on, Muhammad Anfare was appointed the governor of Awsa by *Atse* Menelik where he maintained semi-autonomous status.

However, the Afar soon divided and a power struggle broke out among the factions. Opting for the facilitation of reconciliation, they invited the Abyssinian Kingdom into their internal affairs for the first time in 1898 (Yasin, 2008, p. 45). Since then, Afar fell under the influence of the Abyssinian kingdom on its internal affairs. Yet, the Kingdom of Danakil (Afar land) and the northern part of the Somali State were annexed fully only after the turn of the 20th century. The direct involvement of the central government of the Empire of Ethiopia, however, would not start until 1944 where *Atse* Haile Selassie I could involve for the first time in "the deposition, selection and appointment of Awsean sultans" (Yasin, 2008, p. 45).

Kingdom of Yemma (Yangaro)

The kingdom that came to be known as the kingdom of *Janjero/Yangaro* was the kingdom of Yem (Yemma) people (Tafla (1987, p. 997). The Yemma people however do not call themselves or their kingdom by the name Janjero. It is at best derogatory and at worst insultingly dehumanizing. The Abyssinians associate the name with the legend of the extraordinary capacity of the Yemma people to climb trees, mountains, and rocky cliffs, particularly during wartime.

The Kingdom of Yemma was one of the oldest kingdoms in south-central Ethiopia. When it was first established is not known. It was the most northerly kingdom in southern Ethiopia. Bulbul River in the west, Gibe River in the north and the east, and Omo Nada in the southbound it. It was an isolated enclave territory surrounded by three mountains: Bor Ama, Azulu, and Toba. It was probably a strong kingdom before the end of the 16th century. *Atse* Menelik II incorporated it into the Kingdom of Abyssinia after its conquest in 1894. Presently, it is Yem Special Wereda in SNNP state bordered by Oromia state in north and west, by Hadiya Zone of SNNP in the south and east, and by Guragie Zone of SNNP in the northeast.

According to Huntingford (1955, pp. 137-144), the first king of the Yemma comes from the Dynasty of Halmam Gama, who claimed Abyssinian origin. Haberland (1992, p. 710) on the other hand suggests that the founder of the Yamgor, meaning Yemen Land, might be of Arab origin. Though the reference to tribute paying kingdom by the name Zenjero [Yangaro] was first mentioned in the soldiers' song in honor of *Atse* Yeshaq (r. 1412-1427) of Abyssinia, according to Rita Pankhurst (1997, p. 90) and, therefore, assumed to have been tributary kingdom by the Abyssinian historians, it was not known to the Europeans until 1613: by the time it was known, it was an independent kingdom. It was a small and unobtrusive kingdom. The Portuguese Jesuit Father Antonio Fernandes (1569-1642) first visited it when he was exploring for a route south to Malindi on the east African shore of the Indian Ocean from his base in Abyssinia at Gorgora through the region.

At the time of its conquest by the army of *Atse* Menelik II, the rulers appear to have become Oromo. Even though it is not clear how the Oromo had become its masters, its last kings had unmistakable Oromo names. Its last king was *Abba Bagibo* who was defeated by *Atse* Menelik II's general, *Ras* Wolde Giorgis, in 1894. After the defeat of his army, the king fled to Guragie country but eventually submitted himself to *Atse* Menelik II in Addis Ababa. The king's son, *Abba Chabsa*, after accepting Christianity and take a new name, Gebre Medhin, became *balabat* in his former kingdom at the service of the Abyssinian feudal ruler, Mengesha Wube.

Kingdom of Konta

The state of Konta was located between Kaffaa and Dawuro (Haberland, 1981). It was formed around 1800 CE, not long before the arrival of the Abyssinian army in the region (Haberland, 1981). It was a Cushitic state located between Gojab and Omo rivers (Tafla, 1987). The Abyssinian kingdom annexed it in the late 1880s (Tafla, 1987). It was a centralized kingdom where local governors were elected by the people and confirmed by the king (Haberland, 1981). The kingdom had districts known as Bake, Koysha, Agarre, Dalba, Bahe, Golda, Mankala, and Dalba until it was divided into Konta Proper and Koysha, after the death of its famous king Gobe in 1837 (Haberland, 1981). Konta was finally conquered by the Imperial army of *Atse* Menelik II led by *Ras* Wolde Giorgis around 1875 (Haberland, 1981). The kingdom was annexed to the empire of Abyssinia following the conquest but its royals were allowed to exercise some residual power under the rule of *Atse* Menelik II (Haberland, 1981). Presently it is represented by Konta Special Wereda in SNNP state.

Kingdom of Dawuro

Dawuro was a walled kingdom in present southern Ethiopia. It was a centralized kingdom ruled by Kauka Dynasty until it was conquered by the Abyssinian army in 1891 (Zeleke, 2007). It had impressive protection walls, part of which is still intact, believed to have been built during the 16th to 18th centuries (Abebe, 2004; Zeleke, 2007). It was located between the kingdom of Wolaita in the east and the kingdom of Konta in the west. It was comparable in landmass and competitive to the Kingdom of Wolaita. It was conquered and annexed by the Kingdom of Abyssinia in the late 19th century.

Ogden Region

Ogden is a territory annexed to Abyssinia from mainland Somalia after much resistance from some Somali clans and Islamic nationalists. It is part of the territory inhabited by mainly Ogdeni and Marehan major sub-clan of the Darod Somali clan family in the south and central and Haber Yunis of Ishaak clan and Issa clan in the north and northeast. The region is named after the Ogdeni after this clan dominated major sub-clans in the region. It is bordered by two States of the Ethiopian Federation (Oromia and Afar) and three east

African countries (Somalia, Kenya, and Djibouti). It is bordered by Oromia State in the west and with Afar State in the northwest. The republics of Somalia and Kenya border Ogden in the east and south respectively.

The annexation of the region was gradual. The nominal colonization of the Ogden region started with the claim of *Atse* Menelik II to Somali territory in the 1880s (Castagon, 1975, p. xxiv), during the European scramble for Africa. The *Atse* was prepared to amass as much territory as possible after he had announced to Great Britain and other colonial powers that he would not be an onlooker when distant nations colonize territories in his neighborhood. After the defeat of Italy at the Battle of Adwa, *Atse* Menelik II signed a treaty with France and Great Britain on the share of the Somali area (Castagon, 1975, p. xxiv). According to the treaty, Ethiopia became a *de facto* colonizer of the vast Ogden region without a de-marked border with Italian Somaliland. Colonial posts and garrison towns were established in the vast Ogden region by the Abyssinian army that was directed from the command center in Harar.

The Abyssinian control over the Ogden was, however, very nominal. The harsh climate, the nomadic life of the people, the insurrection of the clan leaders, and the affinity of the people with Somalia made it difficult for the imperial Abyssinia to assert its colonial administration on Ogden people in as much as it did in the other colony countries. This has led to the little assimilation of the Somali nation of the state to the Amhara-centered Abyssinian-cum-Ethiopian culture.

The gradual total territorial control of the Ogden region took place from 1897 to 1954. While Great Britain was consolidating its colonial power in the British Somali Land in the northeast, *Atse* Menelik II's army moved into Ogden to establish an Abyssinian local administration in the subsequent years. It, however, faced a great challenge from Somali resistant groups. The most prominent of them was *Sayyid* Mohamad Abdullah Hassan (1856-1920) who waged a "jihad" against the European and Abyssinian colonizers for twenty years from 1899 to 1920. After the death of *Sayyid* (commonly known as Mad Mullah by the British) with the joint military action of Abyssinia and Great Britain, the Ogden region became *de jure* territory of the Empire of Abyssinia. Since 1904 the kingdom of Abyssinia had been attacking the vast stretch of land between the City of Hara and the Italian Somaliland from its command center at Harar, the city-state Menelik had annexed in 1887.

However, the region fell to the control of Italy and Great Britain for a total of two decades before it returned to firm control of Ethiopia. In 1934 the open border led to the Wal-Wal incident that resulted in the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935-1936. Italy occupied Ethiopia from 1936-1941 until the former was liberated by the joint action of the British army and Ethiopian patriots after the latter joined the Axis group and the former joined the Allied group in

the World War II alignment of nations. In 1941, the British Military Administration took over the administration of the Ogden region and it became the protectorate of Ethiopia during the war. Great Britain remained in the Ogden region until 1954 when it handed over the territory to Ethiopia after the remapping of Somalia according to the 1897 treaty that established the provisional boundary between the Ethiopian Ogden region and southern Somalia.

Emirate of Harar

Emirate of Harar was the successor of the mighty Sultanate of Adal. After the military collapse of Adal, following the death of its charismatic leader, Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim Al-Ghazi, Ahmed Gragn, in 1543, Amir Nur ibn Mujahid built the now-famous Harar Wall (*Jegol*) in the mid-16th century and firmly established the city-state in place. The city-state was a multi-national Islamic Sultanate but the main nations of the Sultanate, the Harari (Adere), were privileged in the wall. The Somali and the Oromo were the other main nations. The Oromo joined the city-state hesitantly relatively late but because of the confrontation between the two. The Oromo conquered the Sultanate in 1577 and killed its leader Mansur ibn Muhammad in a battle (Pankhurst, 1997, p. 388). Following the conquest by the Oromo, the Sultanate was forced to move its capital to Awsa, and its new leader, Imam Mahamad Ibrahim Gasa was forced to abandon the city and establish the Sultanate of Awsa in the northern lowland region. This led to the breakaway of the sultanate into Imamate of Harar and Awsa (Delebo, 1982 Eth. C., p. 169). Harar, as it is known today, was founded by Ali ibn Da'ud in 1647 by a breakaway group of Harari people, who stayed in the city when Imam Mahamad Ibrahim Gasa moved to Awsa.

After its formation, the Emirate of Harar (later reduced to Imamate of Harar) fell under successive masters. Shortly after its formation, it fell under the friendly protection of the powerful Ottoman Empire in the mid-16th century. For the subsequent three centuries, it survived under the shadow of the Empire with the unclear status of its sovereignty. In 1818 Egypt occupied the Emirate and later annexed it in 1875 with no resistance from the Harari but only from the Oromo (Rubenson, 1976, p. 317). Egypt had occupied the coastal land from present Eritrea to Zeyla. However, in 1882 when Egypt was occupied with Great Britain, the Imamate became part of the British Empire in Africa. Two years later, the British ceded it to the Kingdom of Abyssinia, in principle, in the treaty known as *Hewet Treaty* (sometimes it is also referred to as Adwa Treaty) in exchange for Abyssinian assistance against the Mehadist forces in Sudan. The Emirate however remained independent for three years.

In 1887, the army of *Negus* Menelik of Shewa annexed the City State of Harar, still calling itself Emirate, after defeating a multinational resistance force composed of the Oromo, Harari, and Somali at the battle of Chelenqo. The resistance force was led primarily by Amir Abdulahi ibn Mahamed. Since then, the city-state of Harar would remain an important part of the Abyssinian Kingdom, which would soon become the Abyssinian Empire-cum- modern Ethiopia.

The Konso State

The Konso state was one of the oldest states. The Konso people are indigenous Cushitic people who have developed a refined socio-cultural and political system closely related to that of the Oromo but in geographical isolation and closed community of about a quarter of a million. It is located in the southwest of the Ethiopian Federation within the Great East African Rift Valley region. It is one of the constituents of the SNNP State. They are bordered with *Boorana* Oromo from Oromia State and with Burji, Tsemai, and Derashe peoples from their SNNP State. The Konso people share tradition, language, ancestry, belief system, and social and political structure with these neighbors (Yimam, 2011). Oral traditions assert that the Konso, Burji, and Darashe peoples had their original common homeland in Liben district, in Borana Zone of Oromia State (Yimam, 2011, p. 6-8).

Before their subjugation in 1897, the Konso state had a republican form of government like that of the mainstream Oromo. It had no kings. An indigenous government headed by an elected benevolent leader held the state power. Every small community of Konso also had an elected leader for its guidance. The Konso government was a *Gadaa* republican government. They had adopted elements of the Gadaa System from the Oromo. With an extensive decentralization of the system, it worked well for them in ensuring their egalitarian close netted society based on a principle, which could be likened to the present community social welfare state.

The Konso, like other southern kingdoms and peoples, came under the subjugation of the Kingdom of Abyssinia in the last decade of the 19th century. In 1897, the army of *Atse* Menelik II subdued the kingdom with the threat of military power first promising its leaders that if the kingdom pays tribute there would be no war. The war was avoided, and the tribute was paid; however, the Kingdom could not keep its sovereignty and became one of the imperial subjects. The army of *Dejazmach* Leuelseged Atnafseged, which might have acted by the order of *Fitawrari* (later *Ras*) Habte Giorgis, conquered the State of Konso (Yimam, 2011).

State of Gedeo

The Gedeo people were independent people who had an adapted *Gadaa* Government. They might have adapted the republican Gadaa government from neighbors, the *Gujii* and *Boorana* Oromo with whom they share distant ancestry, according to the myth of their origin. Like the other southern autonomous peoples, states, and kingdoms, the Gedeo state fall victim to the Abyssinian colonial expansion in the late 19th century. Though the Gedeo state was very small, it tried to resist the military might of *Atse* Menelik II. "After fierce resistance with traditional weapons of war, the Gedeo army was outgunned, over maneuvered and finally subdued by the well-equipped Menelik's army in 1895" (McClellan, cited in Debelo, 2007, p. 45).

Following the submission to the Imperial army of *Atse* Menelik under the threat of force, after attempted armed resistance that proved disastrous, the Gedeo people lost political, social, economic, and cultural security on their land. Debelo (2007, pp. 44-46) explains that though the Gedeo were said to have finally submitted peacefully and deserved some leniency from the colonizing army of *Aste* Menelik II, they faced almost the same consequence as those who were forcefully conquered. Massive settlement districts were established among them, and Amhara colonial settlers arrived from the north. In the immediately instituted "patron-client relationship" between the Abyssinian settlers and the Gedeo people on the right to use the land, the latter were reduced to the status of serfs. The Abyssinian *nafxanyaa* administration erased the republican *Gadaa* administration of the Gedeo and instituted the Abyssinian authoritarian system. This forced them to abandon their traditional administration, part of their culture and tradition, and the social system. Also, the Gedeo peasants were exposed to "backbreaking tribute" where they had to hand over three fourth of the produces that they produce in the "patron-client" relationship to the Abyssinian lords.

The Oromo Kingdoms and the Republican Confederal States

The Oromo are one of the indigenous nations of northeast Africa. They draw their ethnogenesis from ancient Kush, ancient Ethiopia. They were republican nations since the creation of the Gadaa System, which oral tradition suggests was contemporary to Athenian democracy (Lata, 1998, p. 131; Bokku, 2011, p. 162). They were the first nation in the region that has now become northern Sudan, northern Ethiopia, and Eritrea. They however traversed the

East Africa region. By the beginning of the 16th century, they were revolting against the Kingdom of Abyssinia that continued to assimilate or displace them in present central Ethiopia. They were successful in their liberation campaigns, otherwise portrayed as an invasion by the Abyssinian historians, which lasted for a century. They were able to recover much of the land that had been taken from them and resettle it. Consequently, the frontier Oromo communities also started to be influenced by the social, political, and cultural system of the kingdom of Abyssinia.

As mentioned above, I have dealt with the history of the Oromo in East Africa in another book, *New Order in East Africa: The Oromo Nation and Renaissance of True Ethiopia*. I have reproduced a summary of the relevant chapter here. Once again, readers are requested kindly to refer to the extensive work for details. I decided to provide a more elaborate account of the conquest of the Oromo kingdoms and republican states because the conquest of the Oromo was the reason why modern Ethiopia was built.

> During the 17th and 18th centuries, three northern Oromo dynasties (chiefdoms), were formed in northern Ethiopia (Hassen, 1990, pp. 80, 88). These chiefdoms were however in no way representative of the whole Oromo. They were formed in present north-central Ethiopia by some Oromo minority groups who had willy-nilly decided to integrate with the Abyssinian kingdom a century earlier perhaps because of their farther penetration into the territories of Abyssinia Proper of the time. Their chiefdoms/dynasties were modeled after their Abyssinian counterparts. Besides, they had symbiotic relationships with the Amhara and Tigre chiefdoms in the region. They also had strong connections with the Oromo rulers of the province of Gojjam because of being an integral part of the Abyssinian polity. These rulers had also partly integrated with the Abyssinian kingdom during these two centuries but had maintained friendly relationships with their kinsfolk in the Gadaa republican country of the Oromo, the present Oromia, across the Blue Nile in the Oromo mainland region.

In these Oromo countries that have presently become part of the Amhara and Tigray States, accelerate socio-cultural transformations were taking place. These Oromo communities swiftly adopted the Abyssinian culture and political system so much, so that by the mid-18th century they became dominant both in the palace and in the provincial power structure. The

Yajjuu Oromo took the Abyssinian throne in Gondar and made the language of the palace *Afaan Oromoo* and the capital an Oromo town. The northern Oromo ruled the kingdom by the installation of puppet kings on the throne while they governed the kingdom as they wished throughout the *Yajjuu* Dynasty (1769–1855), alias *Zamane Masafent*. The Oromo rule of the kingdom of Abyssinia further integrated and assimilated the northern Oromo into the Abyssinian culture, language, and identity.

This might have become the source of the cantankerous claim by some Abyssinian elites, like Professor Getachew Haile, that the *Luba* government of the Oromo and the monarchy of Abyssinia had coexisted side by side as conjoint governments in Abyssinia. The two governments indeed existed as separate governments of two independent nations. In Abyssinia, most of the Oromo in the present South Gondar, East Gojjam, West Gojjam, South Wollo, North Wollo, and North Shewa Zones of Amhara State and Southern Zone of Tigray State became an assimilated Abyssinians mostly during the *Yajjuu* Dynasty. During this period, even though the Oromo were virtually the rulers of the kingdom, they used Abyssinian monarchy as a source of legitimacy: they did not install the Gadaa government in Abyssinia. After the end of the *Yajjuu* Dynasty, the power of the Oromo declined abruptly, and only the Abyssinian monarchy was strengthened. There was no time in Abyssinian history that the two governments functioned as complementary and equally legitimate governments of the kingdom. Even though Oromo communities who decided to join the kingdom of Abyssinia had their Gadaa leaders and practiced aspects of the Gadaa System, they were never recognized as self-governing polities. These Oromo communities had strong cohesion and affinity towards the Gadaa System, and had the determination to maintain the Oromo identity. One such community in Abyssinia Proper was the *Maccaa* of the south of Lake Tana, in Gojjam. They elected their Gadaa leaders and respected them more than the appointed governors of the legitimate government of Abyssinia (Bruce, 1790, cited in Baissa, 2004, p. 103). Nonetheless, their Gadaa leaders were not part of the structure of the Abyssinian monarchy; nor there was a recognized Gadaa government of the

Oromo in Abyssinia Proper both at the regional and the local levels. Nor the Dynasties of the *Walloo* Oromo were Gadaa dynasties (governments). As most of the Oromo who were gradually integrated into the Abyssinian social and political, as well as, religious-cultural, their structures were more Amharized than Oromo, at least in sense of outward identity, they were more Abyssinian than Oromo, and so was their government.

In the meantime, in the early 19th century, more Oromo monarchies (Mootiis) were formed from among the Gadaa republican Oromo. In the Gibie region, Oromo feudal states of *Limmuu, Gumaa, Gommaa, Geeraa,* and *Jimmaa* were formed in the early 19th century (Hassen, 1990). Similarly, increasingly feudal-like states were formed in West Oromia in the second half of the century. These include *Naqamtee*, *Arjoo*, *Sadii*, *Galaan*, *Garjaa*, *Gidaamii*, and *Sibuu* (Gidada, 2016, p. III). These Oromo *Mootiis* were very detached from the northern Oromo monarchies both geographically and ideologically. Unlike the northern Oromo aristocracies that probably had emulated the Abyssinian system, they were formed as a result of internal evolution in connection to the weakening power of the republican Gadaa government due to excessive decentralization and the growth of power and influence of the *Abbaa Duulaas*, who made themselves Mootiis (kings) against the Gadaa constitution (Gidada, 2016; Hassen, 1990). "The *moti* [Mootii] system was a historical negation to the *gada* [Gadaa] system in Oromia" [Emphasis in the original] (Jalata, 2005, p. 7). The *Mootiis,* however, did not abolish the Gadaa System totally: they continued to use it to their advantage suppressing only its political aspect.

In the remainder vast regions of the present Oromia, however, the Oromo continued to govern themselves with their republican Gadaa System. The power of their Gadaa System was however in continued decline. Also, they soon became under attack from multiple directions. Starting from 1855, the northern Oromo started to suffer from the vengeful and tyrannical attacks of *Atse* Tewodros II. He wanted to drive the Oromo out of present north Ethiopia and unite his Abyssinia Proper with the run-away kingdom of Shewa. The Oromo, however, resisted his onslaught, though at a huge cost of life. The *Walloo* Queens (Mestawot and

Warqitu) played a key leadership role in the resistance. The northern Oromo got a brief respite, after the death of *Atse* Tewodros, during the reign of *Atse* Tekle Giorgis II (r. 1868–1871).

Soon, however, *Atse* Yohannes IV launched a more systemic attack on them. The northern Oromo were forced to accept Christianity, otherwise massacred. In addition, aggressive Abyssinian expansion into the Republican Oromo territories began: The kingdom of Shewa from the Central region, the kingdom of Gojjam from the southwest, began military expeditions into the Oromo heartlands. The *Walloo* Oromo continued to be pressed both from the north by *Atse* Yohannes IV and from the south by *Nigus* Menelik of Shewa. In the east, the eastern Oromo fall under the attack of the expanding Turkish and the occupying Egyptian force before they were conquered by Menelik. In the south, the Oromo country in present north Kenya, the British colonial conquest had begun. Moreover, sporadic fighting between the Oromo and resisting nations and nationalities in the present SNNP State were common. In the second half of the 19th century, the Oromo were under attack almost from every direction: "ploughed by the iron and the fire; flooded with blood and the orgy of pillage," "the theatre of a great massacre" (De Salviac 2005 [1901], cited in Jalata, 2013, p. 26).

These multi-directional attacks on the Oromo made them extremely vulnerable. More than any of the attacks, the attack from the center by *Nigus* Menelik was far devastating to the Oromo. The Oromo traditional weapons and traditional warfare could not stop Menelik, who armed his soldiers very well with up to date European firearms, and had hundreds of thousands of standing armies. By the time he had become *Atse* of the kingdom in 1889, he had subdued the central Oromo country. By 1900, he had conquered all of the countries of the Oromo, which is mostly the present Oromia State, and had expanded the kingdom of Abyssinia by four folds into the Empire of Abyssinia-cum-Ethiopia.

The success of *Atse* Menelik II was undoubtedly the result of the failure of the Oromo resistance (*diddaa gabrummaa*) struggle. Why did the struggle of the Oromo fail?

Before summarizing the most likely reasons for the defeat of the Oromo, it is worthwhile to recapitulate briefly the general situation of the Oromo during the 19th century. During the first half of the 19th century, the country of the Oromo nation, *Ormania*, encompassed the present Oromia State in Ethiopia, most of Kenya, eastern Uganda, south, and southeast of South Sudan, and southwest of Somalia, and northern Tanzania. This vast country of the Oromo has been abundantly rich in every aspect. In the mid-19th, both the European colonialists and Abyssinian expansionists desired the riches of the Oromo country. Some missionaries, for example, Johann Ludwig Krapf who called the country of the Oromo Ormania, lamented that European enterprises were heading to America and Australia instead of Ormania, and wished that the country be settled by Europeans. At the beginning of the second half of the century, the present Oromia was a land coveted by *Nigus* Menelik of Shewa and the Abyssinian kingdom in general. This had been the case since the kingdom had been formed. This time, however, Menelik had not only his power and determination but also the supports of Great Britain, Italy, and France and the division of the Oromo and the weakening of their Gadaa System to his aid to advance his colonial interest. In addition, he had garnered the support of some Oromo leaders who were methodically convinced in the fiddly idea of building a multinational empire in the Horn of Africa region as a counter competition to European colonial expansion. These Oromo leaders would not only help Menelik to subdue the Gadaa republican and the *Mootii* Oromo countries but also other kingdoms, States, and peoples to the south, southwest, and southeast of the kingdom of Abyssinia. After the war of conquest that was by no means less than genocide against the Oromo people, in the late 19th century, Oromia was conquered and its surviving people, half of the population, subjugated. By the end of the century, the Oromo struggle had failed; the Abyssinian settler colonialism in most parts of *Ormania*, now Oromia, had begun. Most of the remainder of *Ormania*, the Oromo country

outside of the present Oromia State, had been colonized by Great Britain and had become part of British East Africa.

Many reasons could be attributed to the failure of the resistance of the Oromo against the Abyssinian conquests. These include:

1. Excessive decentralization of the Gadaa government and *Caffees* and the decline of the unifying power of the Gadaa System that had resulted in the formation of some Oromo monarchies (*Mootiis*)
2. Internal social divisions among the Oromo, both at sub-moiety, junior sub-moiety, and clan levels, that led to destructive competitions, conflicts, and armed clashes among them making them vulnerable to external strategic attacks
3. Multi front wars: first with Turko–Egyptian and Adare alliance and then with Abyssinian and Adare alliance in the east; with Mahdist and the people of Benishangul and Gumuz in the west; with Abyssinians first in north Shewa and in Wollo in the north and then in South Shewa, West Shewa, in Wallagga and Gibie regions, in Arsi and Bale in the Oromo heartland, and finally in *Boorana* in the Oromo heartlands; with British Colonial expansion in the south; and with some of the peoples of the present SNNP from the center
4. The European colonial support to Abyssinia included support in arms and ammunition, military strategy and training, and diplomatic backing; all done competitively by Great Britain, France, and Italy who could not lose the strategic cooperation of the kingdom to one another both for their "spheres of influence" at the time and for their strategic preparation for their hopes to take over the territories of the kingdom for themselves in case the kingdom collapses
5. Lack of modern firearms: Compared to *Atse* Menelik II, who received 715,000 rifles and 50,000,000 ammunitions from European powers during 1868-1900, the Oromo had their traditional weapons; and perhaps an insignificant number of outmoded firearms

6. The devastations of the "Great Famine" not only killed most of the cattle that the Oromo depended on for most of their subsistence but also forced them to move, allowing the Abyssinians to take parts of southern Oromia freely, in search of pastures instead of continuing the battle of resistance
7. Lack of modern political organization and administrative structure to effectively organize the fragmented and dispersed resistance struggles
8. The death of an estimated five million, half of the Oromo population, during the resistance struggle, no doubt, not only had deprived the Oromo of fighting forces but also had sent a reverberating shock across the Oromo country that probably had forced some Oromo resistance groups, particularly those which had established *Mootiis*, to submit to the Abyssinian war-lords without armed resistance.

The conquest of the Oromo and the start of settler colonialism of the Oromo country was pioneered by *Atse* Menelik but most of the work was done by his Oromo associates. Menelik expanded his Shewan kingdom and Abyssinia by conquest mostly through the armies commanded by his noblemen (*negus, betwoded, ras, dajazmach, and fitawrari)* (Akpan, 1985, p. 716). Among these nobilities were Oromo, the likes of *Ras* Gobana Dacie, *Fitawrari* Habtegiorgis (Qusie) Dinagdie, and others. *Atse* Menelik II occupied conquered territories, including Oromia, with 'garrison settlements' in much the same manner as did colonialists from Europe in other parts of Africa (R. Greenfield, 1965, cited in Akapn, 1985, p. 716).

After the failure of the Oromo struggle and their subsequent conquest by the Abyssinian kingdom, the Oromo were reduced to second-class citizens in the newly emerged empire. Socially and economically, the Oromo were reduced to subjects: their language and culture were despised and given inferior position, their land was taken from them because of which most of them became servants of the *nafxagna,* and Abyssinian settler colonialism was instituted among them. Administratively, they were distributed to almost all administrative regions (Arsi, Bale, Gojjam, Harargie, Gamu Gofa, Illubabor, Kaffa, Shewa, Sidamo,

Tigray, Wallaga, and Wallo) of the Empire "in order to create cultural and perceptual differences among the Oromo" in the process of "Ethiopianization" of the Oromo (Jalata, 2005, p. 185). Politically, only a few prominent Oromo individuals had had key powers in the newly carved Empire of Abyssinia. Geographically speaking, the Empire of Abyssinia-cum-Ethiopia has been mostly the country of the Oromo. This is not only because the present Oromia is the largest and the richest state but also because most of the former Abyssinia Proper, most of Amhara State and part of southern Tigray State, has been inhabited by assimilated Oromo who could be about half of the total population. As a result, even though it was formed at the expense of the defeat of the Oromo, it is reasonable to assume that modern Ethiopia is essentially an Oromo country. Yet, the Oromo have been rendered to a second class and as periphery to the political power. What ultimately resulted in such treatment of the Oromo in the Empire of Abyssinia-cum modern Ethiopia was the conquest of the Oromo.

The Oromo were conquered because of both internal and external factors. The centuries-long decentralization of the Gadaa government of the Oromo had resulted in the divided and weakened Oromo nation by the beginning of the 19th century. This encouraged the formation of some Oromo Mootiis in Western and south-western Oromia. In the meantime, the power of the northern Oromo in the kingdom of Abyssinia was beginning to wan. By the middle of the century, they were under an increasing attack by *Atse* Tewodros II, an attack that would be sustained by his successors, *Atse* Tekle Giorgis and *Atse* Yohannes IV. Meanwhile, the eastern Oromo were weakened and occupied by the Egyptians. This was the time when the riches of Ormania—roughly the combination of Oromia State in Ethiopia and the Republic of Kenya—lured colonists both from near and far. More powerful and tactful enemies of the Oromo, however, would emerge from the center, from Shewa. Menelik, *Nigus* of Shewa, quickly grew so powerful and not only rallied some prominent Oromo behind him against their kin but also amassed hundreds of thousands of firearms and trained modern army of the time for his expansion in present central Ethiopia. His ambition was to build an empire carved from the Horn of

> Africa in competition with European colonizers. After succeeding *Atse* Yohannes IV, *Atse* Menelik II was able to defeat the Oromo resistance in a relatively brief period. The Oromo who were highly decentralized in government, internally divided, lacked modern political organization and administration structure, devastated by the "Great Famine," and had been suffering attacks from multiple fronts could not resist the massacre of Menelik II's massive army and the supreme firepower of his hundreds of thousands of soldiers. In addition, Menelik II was supported by the military and administrative advice of some European colonizers. By the time the Oromo nation was subjugated at the end of the century, half of the population from an estimated ten million was destroyed through the war of conquest and the famine and diseases that it had aggravated. Ultimately, the Oromo were subjugated, and the Empire of Abyssinian-cum-modern Ethiopia was formed.
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> The fall of the Oromo was the primary reason for the making of modern Ethiopia. The direct consequence of the defeat of the Oromo resistance against Abyssinian colonialism was the institutionalization of Abyssinian settler colonization in Oromia and the formation of the Empire of Abyssinia-cum modern Ethiopia. Without the conquest of the Oromo, there would have been no modern Ethiopia. In other words, modern Ethiopia was because the Oromo were. With all intents and purposes, this holds true today: Ethiopian federation is because Oromia is. Accordingly, the study concludes that the formation modern Ethiopia would not have been possible without the conquest of the Oromo, the single majority nation from among over seventy nations NNPs, who constitute more than one-third of both of its population and the landmass, and, therefore, modern Ethiopia is essentially an Oromo nation. (Demmeksa, 2018a, pp. 560-567)

Other Colony Countries

Other colony countries include sultanates, traditional petty kingdoms, and self-administering remote peoples. Sultanate of Bellashangul, which was ruled by *Shekh* Hojele Hassen and Sultanate of Gumuz-Guba, which was ruled by *Shekh*

Hamda Abushok, were the western strong sultanates that were conquered by the army of *Atse* Menelik II. The two sultanates are represented by Gambella State and the Benishangul-Gumuz States of the Ethiopian Federation, respectively. The petty kingdoms include, but are not limited to, the traditional kingdoms of Gammo, Maji, Gofa, Bosha, Guragie, Kambata, Male, Shinasha. The self-administering remote peoples include Dime, Disenech, Dizi, Gawda, Komo, Sheko, Shekocho, Shinasha, Arbore, Bencho, Besketo, Bodi, Busa, Chara, Gidicha, Gidole, Gnangatom, Gobeze, Hamer, Kore/Ama, Mao, Melon, Mezengir, Mursi, Mao, Opio, Ori, Surma, Tenbaro, Tsemay, Zeise, Zay, Zelmam. These petty kingdoms and self-administering remote peoples were conquered by the kingdom of Abyssinia during the last decades of the 19th century. Since then, all have been part of modern Ethiopia. Presently, except a few, they belong to the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' State of the Ethiopian federation.

The Legacy of *Atse* Menelik II

Two Remarkable Legacies

The glittering legacy of *Atse* Menelik II is that he built modern Ethiopia combining "blood and fire" and diplomacy. In addition to his hard-fought victories over the Oromo in Shewa, Arsi, Bale, Harargie, and Borena, he built the Empire of Abyssinia by defeating, from among others, Emir Abdulahi of Hara, Imam Umar Beqsa of Gurage, Imam Hassen Enjamo of Hadiyya, Wemai Dilbeto Degoye of Kembata, Tossa Kawo Tona Gaga of Wolaita, Tato Gaki Sheroch of Kaffa, Imam Mohamed Ali of Wollo, Sultan Abba Jifar of Jimma, Moti Moreda Bekrie of Neqemte, Moti Jote Tullu of Qellem, Sheikh Hojele Hassen of Benishangul, Sheikh Hamda Abushok of Gumuz-Guba, Sultan Mohammed Hanfre of Afar (Denakil/Ausa) in battle, through the threat of force, and diplomacy (Delebo, 1983 Eth. C., p. 93). These former independent nations, which were ruled by their kings, emirs, and elected leaders, became subjects of *Atse* Menelik II with varying new statuses. Some of them, who submitted peacefully, remained titular leaders of their self-governing territories under the new empire. The nations and nationalities and peoples that had never been part of the Abyssinian Kingdom as a complementary part of the kingdom were now, at the end of the 19th century, gathered together to form a new empire: The Empire of Abyssinia, later Empire of Ethiopia, now the Ethiopian

Federation. Regardless of how *Atse* Menelik II built modern Ethiopia, history shall always remember him as her founding father.

The brutally conquered NNPs, however, remember *Atse* Menelik II differently.

The Machiavellian *Atse* has secured fame for himself and became the most popular hero in the psyche of the Abyssinian public. He is, however, remembered as otherwise by the majority subjugated non-Abyssinian NNPs. Heroism was not in his person nor did his army won the battle of equals. His victories were attributed to the power of firearms, propaganda of the state church, and the lucky situation of rival European forces canceling each other in East Africa. The atrocities committed by his army during the decades of conquest have left scars in the consciousness of the subjugated people. Some of them lost about half the population, few even more.

War crime and human rights violations were rampant. Terrorizing atrocious acts were prevalent: limbs of his war captives and peaceful opponents were amputated; breasts of mothers were mutilated; women and children of the resisting peoples were enslaved; properties of opponents were looted, and crops and houses of the resisting peoples were burned down; peoples were uprooted from their livelihood and land; northern settler colonial system that would last for about a century was instituted in the south, west, and east of the new empire. The people have regained their freedom from the settler-colonial enterprise since 1974 but the heinous crimes have remained unredressed to date. The victims have been kept waiting for national resolve. Succumbed to the vocal apologists of the *Atse*, the Ethiopian state has not yet acknowledged the crimes committed against humanity, including genocide, on the southern nations and nationalities in the process of building a modern state. This has remained the single biggest grievance of the Oromo and other nations against the modern Ethiopian state. It has remained the biggest obstacle to national unity and political consensus.

The other best-remembered legacy of *Atse* Menelik II is his victory against the invading Italian army at the Battle of Adwa in 1896. It was during the Scramble for Africa. Italy was coming late to the scramble. It had occupied the coastal regions of the southern Red Sea, the present State of Eritrea.

But it had tried to make an inroad into the hinterland but failed several times. Making mistranslation of one of the articles of the peace treaty it had signed with Menelik II at Wuchale, Italy wished to occupy Abyssinia. It's crossing of the Mereb River, the conventional border, met with a determined response from *Atse* Menelik II. The two kingdoms went to a truly short war. The Battle of Adwa, in northern Abyssinia, was the decisive battle. *Atse* Menelik II was triumphant. Abyssinia was victorious over colonial Italy. This victory was a remarkable victory not only for Abyssinia but also for

Africa and the black race in general. It was for the first time that an African army (an African nation) defeated a European army (a European nation).

It is however clear that *Atse* Menelik II himself did not fight the battle. He and his wife, *Etegie* Tayitu Bitul, were the leaders and the credit is due to them as much. The single most important thing he did was issuing his now-famous decree calling the people to fight the enemy, the Italian forces. The rest was the job of his war ministers, generals, and patriotic people. The fighters were soldiers, recruits, and volunteers from the NNPs who by then had fallen under the Abyssinian imperial rule.

Among them were the Oromo. They formed most of the cavalry regiments on the battle of Adwa. Nonetheless, the conquered nations, mostly the Oromo, who were forced to fight along their colonizer like the thousands of Eritreans who fought alongside their colonizer, Italy, and gave the Abyssinians the victory at the Battle would be marginalized from its credits and its history with systematic removal of their names and their heroic deeds or by the attribution of their heroism and names to Abyssinians. Oromo cavalry played the decisive role at the Battle of Adwa by gallantly riding into the enemy center, by blocking passages of the enemy to strategic defense and supply, and by trapping the enemy off its line of retreat (Jonas, 2011), and the Oromo leaders and heroes of the battle, would be suppressed from history, in as much as if mentioning their Oromo names in the annals of Ethiopian history in par with even the weaklings of the Abyssinians was a proclaimed taboo. Few Oromo heroes of the battle, who had Christian given names or had a seemingly Amharic first name, would be mentioned only when it would be necessary to mention at the expense of never mentioning the Oromo names of their fathers. For the minority Abyssinian colonizers whom they gave the victory against Italy at the Battle of Adwa loved it so dearly, the majority non-Abyssinians who earned the victory had to give it up in history for and the name of their colonizers: did not the colonies win for their colonizers in those days? As the over seven thousand of Eritreans who fought for Italy at the Battle of Adwa would not be remembered as fallen Italians, the thousands (perhaps tens of thousands) of Oromo who died at the battle would not be remembered as Oromo, or their identities would be suppressed for the Abyssinian-cum-Ethiopian identity. The same was true for other non-Abyssinians who took part in the Battle of Adwa.

Other Legacies

By the turn of the first decade of the new century, internally, *Atse* Menelik II had built some modern state structures through his "modernization" programs. He had established a Crown Council for the administration of the

affairs of the crown. He had set up a nine-man cabinet and Prime Minister Office in October 1907 (Jalata, 2005, p. 92; Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 153; Marcus, 1994, pp. 110-111) to formally deal with the administration of the empire. This was the first cabinet in the history of the empire. *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis Dinegde was appointed prime minister (Marcus, 1994, p. 111). Bank of Abyssinia, through the National Bank of Egypt, had opened the opportunities of world financial markets for Abyssinians since 1905 (Marcus, 1994). Postal services had already been running well in the capital and between the provinces when, in 1908, Abyssinia become a member of the international postal union. Compulsory education had been decreed (Jones & Monroe, 1935). Formal education had begun. *Abuna* Matewos (1857-1926), Coptic bishop who arrived in Abyssinia in 1882 and residing in Shewa was appointed acting Minister of Education. He brought the first Egyptian teachers for the first modern Ethiopian school (Tafla, 1987, p. 948). The famous and pioneer Menelik II High School and other schools had been opened in Addis Ababa. Many health services centers, including Menelik II hospital, had been opened. He had decreed the introduction of a new code that replaced the old customary code (Jones & Monroe, 1935). He had introduced an independent appeal system for a provincial court hearing and had legislated property rights of inheritance (Marcus, 1994). He had successfully introduced an effective taxation system in 1910 that replaced the tribute system (Jalata, 2005, p. 75). By 1912, the state bureaucracy had started replacing the arbitrary rule and emergency orders and the Abyssinian Empire had started to take the conventional modern state structure at the down of this "modernization."

By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, *Atse* Menelik II had positioned his empire among the world powers, unparalleled from among African states. He had negotiated boundary treaties with Italy, France, and Great Britain; and had signed a commercial treaty with Germany and the USA. Following the defeat of Italy in 1896 and the consequent signing of the peace treaty between Italy and Abyssinia in October 1896 in Addis Ababa, the French renewed the commercial treaty that the grandfather of *Atse* Menelik II had signed with France in 1843 in January 1897 (Budge, 1928, pp. 531-532). In 1901 and 1902, the progress of the French railway from Djibouti to Addis Ababa was impressive. In May 1902, *Atse* Menelik II signed a border treaty of "Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Eritrea" following which the British were permitted to build railway in Abyssinia territory and, a month later, "a portion of Denakil territory was ceded to Italy" (Budge, 1928, p. 537). From 1897 to 1908, a complete circle of the boundary of his empire has been fully drawn much like it is today except with Italian Somali land that was variously defined in two separate treaties in 1897 and 1908 (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 152). In 1903, *Atse* Menelik II signed a commercial treaty with the United States of

America; and he signed another commercial treaty with the government of Germany in 1905 (Budge, 1928, pp. 538-539). Now, he felt that he was at peace with the world powers of his day.

However, these strategic moves by *Atse* Menelik II worried the European powers who had started earlier diplomatic and strategic relations with the kingdom of Shewa and Abyssinia. Jones &Monroe (1935, p. 539) and Marcus (1994, p. 108) explain that in July 1906 Great Britain, France, and Italy wanted to consolidate their influence on Abyssinia. They had signed a tripartite agreement of non-intervention on the "sphere of influence" (France on the Ethio-Djibouti railway, Great Britain on the Blue Nile basin, and Italy on the strip of land that would connect Eritrea with Italian Somali land) without informing *Atse* Menelik II. *Atse* Menelik had responded to the three powers in clear terms telling them that their agreement in no way limits his sovereign rights. According to Budge (1928, p. 539), in December the same year, these three great European powers, presented to *Atse* Menelik II their concerns. They were worried about the stability of the new empire after *Atse* Menelik II in case he dies suddenly due to his deteriorating health. Their concern was that, if the unwanted happens, the empire might fall into anarchy and civil war. In their letter, they state, "though they desired above all things to see the integrity of Abyssinia maintained, they would be prepared in the event of civil war or anarchy to take steps in common to safeguard the interests of their respective countries." The *Atse* once again responded telling them in plain language that he oversaw his country and he was its only master.

By the time of his death on 12 December 1913, *Atse* Menelik II had finalized his empire-building with almost the same boundary of the present Ethiopian Federation and positioned it on par with the European colonial powers that circled his only independent African empire. This was the beginning of the transformation of the Empire of Abyssinia into the Empire of Ethiopia. The Empire began to develop gradually feature of a highly centralized imperial state by introducing state structure and crosscutting state services and bureaucracies, all taking the Abyssinian history, culture, and language as its foundation. The new multinational, multicultural, and multilingual Empire was poised to become a mono national, monocultural, and monolingual Empire. It was the beginning of the infamous nation-state building project.

The result of continued conquest and annexation of nations (some of whom had their kingdoms, republican state structures) and minority nationalities that had started from the Aksumite period and went through the period of Abyssinian kingdom, but intensified under *Atse* Menelik II from mid-19th to early 20th century had yielded a new form of natural diversity but a forced unity. The culmination of the empire-building project was naturally the

mosaic of nations, nationalities, and peoples with a diversity of culture, language, traditions, and national identity.

However, the colonizing force put them under forced assimilation to an Abyssinian monoculture, language, tradition, and identity. It was an Abyssinian victory. The non-Abyssinian NNPs started to face the hard reality of losing oneself-whole to all-encompassing forced assimilation. They were not anymore allowed to be themselves; nor do they have any autonomy. Their freedom was gone. They were no more sovereign nations or free people. They were people of the colony country. As people of colony country, all NNPs had to appropriate themselves into the Abyssinian frame of culture, language, tradition, customs, way of life, and identity in as much as the way free-roaming animals have to fit in and adapt to a zoo.

The language of the forced assimilation or fitting everyone into the dominant Abyssinian frame became to be known as "unification" and "unity." The long-sought (starting from *Atse* Tewodros in the mid-19th century) unification of the Kingdom of Abyssinia has been achieved. However, the use of the term "unification" was found to be politically more useful as the pretext for conquests of new territories and peoples than the initial intention of unification of the Kingdom of Abyssinia.

Along with such use of the term, "unification" emerged the merely psycho-political manipulative and legitimization claim of the newly colonized territories as had belonged to the Abyssinian kingdom. Though it has little or no grain of truth in it, the claim worked well as a strategy in those days for *Atse* Menelik II to take his share from the scramble for Africa using it against European powers who were taking territories from around his empire. Once this purpose was served, the Abyssinian aristocratic elites continued the denial of reality and try to suppress the truth.

These served no justice to anyone nor does an official invention automatically turn to be history. It added an insult to the wounds of the colonized NNPs and forced them to take arms and struggle for the lost freedom. Because the imperial state was "founded on explosive conjunction of antagonistic class and ethnic division that made it inherently unstable" (Vaughan & Tronvoll, 2003, p. 82) the class and ethnic struggles continued as an internal ulcer within the new frame of the "unified empire". The NNPs of the Ethiopian Federation, through their struggles, finally regained most of their freedom more than a century later and have now formed the Ethiopian Federation based on their will.

Nonetheless, some Abyssinian historians (proponents of the AAAE narrative) continued to argue the colonization of the rest of the NNPs of the Ethiopian Federation by the Amhara-dominated Abyssinia was "unification" of Abyssinia (Ethiopia). They continued to describe the colonization as

"unification" and the colonial empire that most non-Abyssinian historians and revolutionaries describe as "prison house of nationalities" (Abbay, 2004, p. 595; Berhe, 2009, p. 63; Debelo, 2007, pp. 29, 101; Hameso, 1996, pp. 2,11; Jalata, 2005, p. 84; Marcus, 1994, p. xi) as "unity."

They continued to do so in the post-Empire of Ethiopia. Even today, after the Ethiopian Federation has survived almost a quarter of a century, they continued to try dispiritedly to manifest their version of "unity" in the old catchphrases maxims of the AAAE: "One language!" "One religion!" "One country!" "One culture" "One nation!" and "One Ethiopia!" On the other hand, the NNPs of the Ethiopian Federation have attuned their maxims differently and institutionalized in the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Day of the federation. Their maxims are: "Unity in diversity!" and "Our diversity is our beauty!"

Empire of Abyssinia after *Atse* Menelik II

The legacy of *Atse* Menelik II continued. However, the power once again temporarily falls into the hands of the powerful *Rases* and the heroine Taitu, the widow of Atse Menelik. Starting from the last few years of *Atse* Menelik II when disease and strokes, the two sides incapacitated him had their internal fights and the latter had emerged the loser. The new heir to the throne (named heir in June 1908, proclaimed heir in 1909, and proclaimed Atse formally in 1913 aged 17), the young Lij Iyasu[32] was not ready to administer the complex empire. His regent, *Ras* Tasamma, who, according to Budge (1928, p. 540), guided him through many difficulties since 1909, was poisoned in 1911 and a council was formed instead. Lij Iyasu began to assume political power with the guidance of the council of ministers in April 1911 immediately after the death of *Ras* Tasamma (Jalata, 2005, p. 92). However, he was not declared capable to rule by the council until he was eighteen in 1913 though he was chairing the council of regency since he was eleven immediately after the incapacitation of *Atse* Menelik II. Yet again, a new power struggle had already started in the palace behind the scenes that would end in the deposition of Lij Iyasu after three years.

Lij Iyasu tried two things that were considered highly sensitive both to the Abyssinian aristocracy and to the European powers: Italy, Great Britain, and French. One was his "idle fixe was a society in which religious and ethnic affiliations did not matter," (Marcus, 1994, p. 113) and the other was that he claimed descent not from king Solomon, as the Abyssinia rulers did for centuries, but from Prophet Mohammed (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 158). For the Abyssinian society, which took much pride in being Christian and in the

mythical origin of their kingdom and monarchs from King Solomon of Israel, such moves from Lij Iyasu were shockingly radical. Abyssinian elites and the state church were not ready for the then-radical idea of religious and ethnic neutrality in the empire. They were rather ready to guard the dominance of Christianity and the Amhara-Tigre alliance at any cost. They were also ready to protect the myth of the origin of the kingdom and its monarchs. Similar sentiments were reflected by the Christian European powers. They preferred Abyssinia remain Christian. The radical ideas of *Lij* Iyasu were alarming to them lest he could take the empire to the sphere of influence of Islam and the Ottoman Turks. Iyasu would risk the support of conservative Abyssinian Christian elites and that of their European counterparts for his policy of religious and ethnic neutrality and his crown for his choice of new descent.

Regarding his new choice of descent, *Lij* Iyasu was serious. According to Jones & Monroe (1935, p. 158), he ordered the Moslem fakirs to produce a genealogy proving his claim. The genealogy of his descent from Prophet Mohammed was thus prepared: 1. Muhammed I, 2. Fatima, 2. Husen, 4. Zen al-Abdin, 5. Muhammad al-Bajgir, 6. 'Abd-Allah, 7. Musa al-Kadim, 8. 'Umar, 9.Taj Allah, 10, Yahya, 11. Isma'il, 12. Nur Ahmad, 13. Khalil, 14. Ibrahim, 15. Muhammad II, 16. Tamam, 17. Taj ad-Din, 18. Muhammad III, 19. Yagut, 20. Ya'kub, 21. Imam Nawr, 22. Sani Allah, 23. Isa, 24. 'Aisha, 25. Zane al-Kher, 26. Nur Husen, 27. Shams ad-Din, 28. Nur ad-Din, 29. Dwa ad-Din, 30. Papu, 31, Imam 'Ali I, 32. Imam Muhammad I, 33. Imam Ahmad, 34. Imam Muhammad II, 35. Imam Lihan, 36. Imam 'Ali II, 37. Mika'el (Muhammad 'Ali), 38. Lij Iyasu (Budge, 1928, pp. 546-547).

Furthermore, Lij Iyasu not only transgressed the traditional family formation among the royal families, where the marriage should be pre-approved and must be with a Christian in an Abyssinian Orthodox faith but also declared allegiance to Islam. Jones & Monroe (1935) write:

> He wore the Moslem turban and scimitar, put away his Christian wife, and started a harem. … Finally, he presented the Turkish Consul-General with the green, red, and gold [green, gold, and red] Abyssinian flag embroidered with a crescent and the device: 'There is no God but Allah.' He gave replicas to his Moslem subjects in the southern lowlands and declared the country subject to the religious rule of Turkey. (p. 158)

The ideas of Iyasu were viewed as treasonous and revolutionary in the aristocratic and Christian religious circles. The conservative Christian aristocracy did not like his ideas at all. The state church, the Abyssinian Orthodox Tewahdo Church, was immensely furious. Having a Muslim *Atse*, with the potential to turn the country that has long taken pride in itself as a 'Christian Island in a Muslim sea,' into Islam was unacceptable. His intended

policy was thus viewed as treasonous. His view of "equality of opportunity for all, regardless of race, religion, caste, and way of life" (Marcus, 1994, p. 117) tested revolutionary and bitter to the aristocracy that has just started enjoying the riches of the conquered NNPs.

The European powers, on the other hand, seemed to be more concerned with the affiliation and unity that *Lij* Iyasu had started with Muslim Turkey than the conversion of Abyssinia or the imperial socialism intended by *Lij* Iyasu. The British diplomat who lived in southern Abyssinia for seven years during and after World War I, Arnold Wienholt Hodson suggests:

> Lij Yasu…realised that hitherto, Abyssinia had not fallen in to the hands of European countries during the scramble for Africa simply because rival plan had luckily canceled one another, that Islam was the one religion which was making great headway in Africa, and that therefore an Islamic Empire would offer the best chance of successful resistance to European Powers. (Hodson, 1927, p. 124)

Hodson (1927) further suggests that this idea may have come from the alliance between Turkey and Germany who enjoyed a distinct advantage in Abyssinia over the *entente* powers-Italy, Great Britain, and France.

The three European powers and the USA preferred *Ras* Tafari to Lij Iyasu on the ground of their alignment in the First World War (Jalata, 2005, p. 93). Turkey and Germany were their enemies in the First World War, which was going on at the time. They visualized the new Turkish power in Abyssinia, an enclave that they rounded up and could not have peace of mind until they have removed the threat. "British, Italian, and French troops were moved to Berbera, Massaua, and Jibuti [Djibouti] respectively" (Jones & Monroe, 1935, pp. 158-159) threatening the empire. In September 1916, *Lij* Iyasu was deposed by a joint decision of the head of the State Church and the council of ministers while he was in Jijiga. He fled to the Danakil region in the northeast and started his long life of camping and imprisonments[33]. Following the dethronement of *Lij* Iyasu, the uncrowned *Atse*, Askale Mariam (Zewditu), daughter of *Atse* Menelik II was declared the head of the state. She was crowned *Etegie* on 11 February 1917. *Ras* Tafari (later *Atse* Haile Selassie I) became the regent. The most powerful of all the *Rases, Ras* Habte Giorgis Dinegde was proclaimed *Nəgus* (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 159). The three would rule the empire with balanced "influence and following" for ten years until the latter died. They would build the foundation for the transformation of the Abyssinian Empire to the Empire of Ethiopia.

This decade was the good part of the formative years for *Ras Tafari Mekonnen* who would be crowned *Atse* in 1930 taking the crown name Haile Selassie I. As regent, he diligently continued the state formation and

modernization taking a progressive position while *Ras* Habte Giorgis was more cautious and chose to be conservative particularly on relations with Europe. His policies facilitated commercial growth, investments and financing, trade, import, and export businesses, plantations, aggressive taxation, and strengthening of the state bureaucracy. However, he maintained the socio-economic orthodoxy of the era of *Atse* Menelik II. The feudal political economy and the colonial structure remained intact. The notable slight change in this regard was the transformation of the feudal nobility into an oligarchy (Marcus, 1994, p. 120).

Diplomatically, Haile Selassie, I was successful. He started building a good image of his country and himself abroad. He succeeded in taking Abyssinia into a member of the League of Nations on 28 September 1923 with little resistance[34]. In effect, he put Africa among the European powers and made his empire at least diplomatically equal to Western members of the league. He opposed the bilateral agreement between Italy and Great Britain. The agreement was for the former to build a railway connecting Eritrea and Italian Somali-land, and the latter to build a dam on the *Lake Tana* and a connecting road from Sudan both according to the 1906 tripartite treaty among France, Italy, and Great Britain for designation of their respective "sphere of influence" in Abyssinian territories. His objection was on the ground of sovereign membership of the League of Nations to which all the three were members.

For common people, nothing had changed. The isolation of Abyssinia during the First World War had negative consequences on the local economy. In the newly annexed territories, a new cadre of the empire from Abyssinia continued to settle among the local community and grab their land. The oppression of some of these peoples included enslavement, displacement, dehumanization, and conversion to serfdoms. The Abyssinia settlers scrambled the land among them and became property owners, including land, in the country where they were guests. Some local chiefs who had sworn loyalty to the crown and the *Atse* also joined them. Their social structure, administrative system, culture, and way of life shattered, the colonized NNPs largely remained unaware of the politics at the capital and the diplomacy abroad. They were busy forcing themselves to learn the new language, culture, and tradition, and governance system (because now they are no more free peoples) while abhorring it.

By 1930, *Ras* Tafari had modernized the army, including the Royal Air Force. He had crushed the rebellion from *Ras* Gugsa, the husband of Etege Zawditu, and had him killed. He systematically suppressed the resistance from *Dajazmach* Balcha Safo (Balcha Abba Nafso) from the southeast. He succeeded in getting the elevation to a status of *Nəgus* from the Etege. He survived a cue by place reactionaries. He signed an arms purchase treaty with the three

European powers, Great Britain, France, and Italy. He had encircled himself with foreign advisors and his cronies. He was in full control of the empire, the palace advisors, and diplomacy. In short, he had become the new autocratic and absolute ruler in the political system that has traditionally been autocratic and "concentrated on personality cult" and favor centralism (Tafla, 1994, pp. 5- 6).

At the death of Etege Zawditu on 2 April 1930, *Ras* Tafari was already at the zenith of the imperial power. His coronation on 2 November the same year added him no more power but the formality of customs and tradition where he took a coronation name of Haile Selassie I and a title of *Atse*. The extravagant coronation and the self-rewarding protocol typical of dictators was, however, the marker of the down of the new form of rule for the newly emerging form of empire. Now "His Imperial Majesty" is named, officially, as "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Haile Selassie I, Elect of God, king of kings of Ethiopia."

Notes to Chapter 6

1 Some sources which are dated from the mid of 19th century mention that the ruling Dynasty of Shewa was established by Ya'eqob, the son of Lebne Dengel (r. 1508-1540) (Tafla, 1987, p. 952) but because of the absence of any first-hand document, the account remains to be not fully supported. Also, Budge (1928) provided a partial list of ancestors of *Atse* Menelik II starting from Neguse I (d. 1580), through Gabriel (d. 1625), Neguse II (d. 1705), Asfa Wesen I (d. 1720), Abe (d. 1745), Amba Iyesus (d. 1775), Asfa Wesen II (d.1808), Wasen Sagad (d. 1812), Sahle Selassie (d. 1846), Hayle Malakot (d. 1863), to *Atse* Menelik II (d. 1913).

2 Sahle Selassie's horse name was "Abba Dina," an Oromo phrase (*Abbaa Diinaa*) meaning master of the enemy (Tafla, 1987, p. 963). He was known for many campaigns against the Oromo in the campaign for territorial expansion that his later successor, *Atse* Menelik II, would take it to the limit.

3 He later served Menelik as provincial governor, court councilor, and military commander until 1880.

4 According to a story written by Pawlos Nyonyo, Menelik was born from a servant named Ejigayehu Lemma Adiyamo. The servant was initially prepared for Seyfu. However, his brother Haile Melekot impregnated her. Nəgus Sahle Selassie, being ashamed of the fact that his son impregnated a servant and the servant gave birth to him, murmured in Amharic "ምን ይልሀ ሸዋ?"- "What is Shewan going to say about you?" From this, the name Menelik (What is he going to say?) was adopted later.

5 Italy would not know that a few years later *Atse* Menelik II would turn the firearms, the strategic military advice, and his European trained army against it and crushingly defeat it at the battle of Adwa in 1896.

6 In his book *Modern Abyssinia* published in 1901, Augustus B. Wylde, former British vice-consul for the Red Sea, who traveled in Abyssinia from Mitswa to Addis Ababa and to Zeila passing through all big urban centers en-route at the time, made an important observation of Abyssinian peasants and soldiers. He wrote: "There is no harder worker than Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy, and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldiers, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator" (Wylde, 1901, p. 3). Under *Atse* Menelik II Europeans trained the soldiers. The sheer number of soldiers later became a source of worry to Menelik. Wylde, at the time when *Atse* Menelik II was still campaigning in the south for his conquest of the southern NNPs, adds his concern about the large army of *Atse* Menelik II. "The final settlement of southern portion of Abyssinian kingdom will leave Nəgus Menelik face to face with the question of what to do

with his fighting feudal barons and his large army, as he will have no enemies to conquer and his neighbours will be either under English, Italian or French protection" (Wylde, 1901, p. 9). However, *Atse* Menelik II easily made the baron and the army into naftagna.

7 Abyssinian military ranks and files are as significant as they are complex. Though they evolved, Alexander Bulatovich, who once served in the Army of *Atse* Menelik, provides elaborate conceptual gradation of military ranks of the Abyssinian army of the time in his account of a trip to the southwestern regions of the Ethiopian Empire 1896-97 titled From Entotto to the River Baro (Bulatovich, 1897, Military Hierarchy), which is reproduced directly as under.

"Negus negasti [also called *Atse]* is-- the emperor, commander-in-chief of all armies.

Negus-- king, commander of the army of his own kingdom.

Ras-- field marshal, independent commander of the army of his region or of one of the armies of the emperor or of a negus.

Dajazmatch-- full general or lieutenant general, commander either of his own army or of a detachment of the emperor, of a negus or of a ras.

Fitaurari-- major general, leader of either a separate army or one of the detachments of the emperor, a negus, a ras, or a dajazmatch. Etymologically, fitaurari means "to plunder forward," in other words, leader of the advance guard.

Kanyazmatch-- colonel, leader of a detachment. This word can be translated as "leader of the right-wing," but this is false. They are just as often on the left-wing as on the right. Zmatch means "nobleman" and kan means "right." In other words, "nobleman of the right." Formerly, in ceremonial processions, they stood to the right of the throne, just as the likaunts and azzajs were of the right and left sides. Dajazmatch means "noble of the doors." They stood in front of the throne and even farther in front of them stood the fitaurari.

Gerazmatch-- lieutenant colonel, noble of the left, leader of a detachment of the emperor, a ras, a dajazmatch, or afitaurari.

Balambaras-- commandant. Literally translated "leader where there is a fort"; corresponds to captain.

Yamato alaka-- leader of a company, captain, junior captain.

Yaamsa alaka-- leader of a half company, lieutenant.

Afa negus-- "mouth of the negus," the chief justice, general procurator.

Azzaj-- court marshals or those who govern estates.

Bajeronds-- also court posts of paymasters or heads of workshops. Of all of these, we must note the likamakos-- the post of adjutant general. They

constantly must be near the emperor and have a profound influence. Formerly, they had the responsibility of dressing in the clothes of the emperor in times of war. They have their own soldiers and are comparable in importance to a dajazmatch-- commander of a detachment."

8 She married many notables, i.e. Wag Seyyum Gwandgul Zagayye, Dejazmach Webe Atnaf Seged, and Ras Gugsa Wale, after Ras Araya Selassie Yohannes.

9 According to Raymond Jones (2013) (Muluken Tariku tran.), Tayitu Bitul was the most influential woman in the political history of the kingdom. She was a wealthy Oromo who had large-scale farmland and generous size cattle. She was a politically intelligent woman. Also, she had a strong connection to the northern aristocratic families. Because of these, it was easy for Menelik II to be accepted in the northern region and among the northern aristocracy when he later became the *Atse* of the kingdom. Menelik on his part had a strong ambition to be the *Atse*. The marriage between the two was therefore more than simple political marriage.

10 His father was Nəgus Haile Melekot, the son of Nəgus (king) Sahele Selassie. He was born from a palace servant named Egigayehu. However, Haile Melekot legitimized his birth by concluding civil marriage with the servant (Marcus, 1994, p. 66).

11 It was a political concept that the self-appointed *Atse* Tewodros before him had adopted to bring an end to the infamous "Era of the Princes", during which the Abyssinian kingdom was dispersedly ruled by rival local chiefs (some of them declared themselves princes or crowned themselves kings) in a highly decentralized manner.

12 Amhara then refers to the provinces of Gondar and part of Wollo, which were also known as Begemeder and Amara Sayint. At other times it exclusively referred to the northern Shewa district of present-day Amhara State

13 Ras Mekonnen was an Oromo. His full name is Mekonnen Woldemika'el Guddisa. Guddisaa is a typical Oromo name.

14 Jones & Monroe (1935, pp. 155-56) noted that the continued flooding of the country with arms after the battle of Adwa worried British, French, and Italian legations prompting them to protest against *Atse* Menelik II's excessive hoarding of arms. The French later took the serious decision of closing the port of Djibouti but to no effect until when *Atse* Haile Selassie I signed an Arms Traffic Act with Britain, France, and Italy thirty years later in August of 1930. This was because plenty of other options were available at a trade on the cost.

15 The victory of *Atse* Menelik II over the Italian invading army on 1 March 1896 was not only a victory that propelled *Atse* Menelik II to international fame and exultant pride for the sparkling black people's victory over European colonial power but also gave him a blazing boost of morale and military strength to further expand and conquer more native African kingdoms in the south. The

morale boost was clear after recording a remarkable victory and glittering history, being the bloodiest imperial conquest battle in the century reducing the Italian colonial army by 70 percent (Marcus, 1994, p. 99), and resulted in bringing down of the Italian government at home. After forty years, Italy would revenge the shameful defeat in a shameful use of banned gas indiscriminately on both humans and animals and occupy the country for five years, until it was once again defeated in 1941.

16 Professor Lapiso G. Delebo (1999 Eth. C.) gives a conservative estimation of 600, 000 rifles noting that the firearm stockpile of *Atse* Menelik II grew more than six folds in seven years after his victory at the Battle of Adwa on the Italian army.

17 If one rifle killed only five persons in those thirty years of imperial conquest, *the Atse* Menelik II army would kill half of the estimated total population of his Empire by 1900.

18 Russia developed an interest in Abyssinia during the reign of Yohannes IV. A Russian envoy, Nicolas Ivanovich Achinoff, was sent to *Atse* Yohannes by the Russian government in 1885 and had established a friendship with the *Atse*. Yohannes IV gave him the land which he called "New Moscow" and permitted him to build a Russian monastery. Yohannes IV also "commissioned him to arm the Abyssinian army, and to buy for this purpose 50,000 rifles, 50,000 carbines, 5000 revolvers, 40 cannon, 5000 swords, and an ample supply of ammunition" (Budge,1928, p. 525). According to Budge (1928, pp. 528-529), in the year 1888 two hundred Russians led by Nicolas Ivanovich Achinoff departed from Odessa to establish a Russian "colony" in Abyssinia. However, the Italians did not let them land at the Italian port of Mitsewa and the French attacked them at the French unoccupied port of Sagallo in Tadjurah in February 1889, allowing only priests from among them to the interior. Achinoff had to return.

19 In Europe, it was believed that all battle-fit Abyssinians had rifles by the end of the 19th century. In its article of 29 October 1898, The Spectator Magazine (a weekly magazine that features the best British journalists, authors, critics and cartoonists since 1828) wrote: "…it seems admitted that nearly every Abyssinian has a rifle and can dispense with a commissariat"(The Great Men of Africa, 1898, p. 7).

20 Guns were introduced to Oromo only in the late 19th century through trade with Abyssinians (see Huntingford, 1955, p. 58).

21 It should also be mentioned that Nəgus Tekle Haimanot of Gojjam also participated in the conquest of the Macha Oromo south of the Blue Nile River in the late 1870s and 1880s. He also participated in the campaign of Kaffa in the 1890s.

22 In one of the raids during 1880-1881, his army reportedly plundered 100,000 head of cattle from Arsi (Marcus, 1994, p. 78)

23 An estimated six thousand Oromo were massacred in a single battle and one of the generals of *Atse* Menelik II alone cut off 400 right hands of Oromo in one day (Legesse, 2006, p. 21). *Atse* Menelik II made such horrifying brutality his custom. This is evidenced in his order to have 406 Eritrean members of the defeated Italian army (war prisoners of the Battle of Adwa) have their right hand and left foot cut off and sending 30 Italian war prisoners home mutilated (Jones & Monroe, 1935, p. 146). Oromia State has started to recognize the atrocities committed against the Oromo during the conquest. More than a century later, the Oromo immortalized this dark history by the *Aannolee* martyrs' monument that symbolically depicts the cut arms and breasts of hundreds of Oromo. Similarly, the Oromia State inaugurated the *Calanqoo* Martyrs monument in March 2015 to honor the fallen thousands of heroes and heroines of the resistance battle of the Abyssinian conquest of Harar.

24 Alexander Bulatovich had stayed in Ethiopia from 5 October 1896 to 14 June 1897 together with Private of His Majesty's Hussar Guard Regiment Zelepukin. During this time, he recorded his observation of the Abyssinian expedition that would be published under the title *From Entotto to River Baro*. He then traveled back to Russia and returned after four months. At the end of November, he joined an important expedition of Abyssinian troops to the south to annex the territory between Abyssinia and Lake Rudolf. He took part in the mission and recorded the eyewitness accounts of the expedition and the annexation of the territory. Artistic Publishing House in St. Petersburg was first published in 1900 with the title, *With the Armies of Menelik II: Journal of an expedition from Ethiopia to Lake Rudolf.*

25 According to Tafla (1987, p. 983), he is one of the sons of *Afa Nəgus* Aboye. He was a cousin of *Atse* Menelik II through his mother. When he was Dajazmach, he was appointed governor of Limmu in 1885. From there, he conquered Kullo and Konta. In 1895 and 1896, he campaigned against the ruler of Awsa, Muhammad Hanfre, together with Azzazy Welde Tsadiq and Dajazmach Tesemma. From 1897–1899, he campaigned in Kaffa. In 1917, he was given the title of King of Kaffa. He governed Kaffa until he died in 1918.

26 It was Mengistu Hale Mariam, not *Atse* Menelik II or Haile Selassie I, that gave the assurances of the sense of belongingness of the Gambella people to Ethiopia by extending the national services of the central government to the Gambella peoples for the first time.

27 The irony went even further when the successor of this Qign Gezyi, *Atse* Haile Selassie I, had no moral displeasure to portray himself in the process of the formation of the Organization of African Unity, now African Union, in the 1960s, as African liberator of Africans from European colonialism. He audaciously portrayed himself as liberator while his monarchy was holding many formerly independent east African kingdoms and states as colony countries in his Empire that he had inherited from *Atse* Menelik II.

28 The *Atse*s of Abyssinia had the tradition of appointing their most feared warlord as Nəgus to the country they wanted to annex before even starting the campaign so that the warlord, motivated with the ambition of becoming Nəgus and joining the high rank of the aristocracy, would make a live-or-die battle to conquer a "new" kingdom for himself.

29 For the complete list of kings of Kaffa for five hundred years, from 1390-1890, see Huntingford (1955, p. 104).

30 Italy dispatched 21,000 soldiers at Adwa; Ras Welde Giorgis dispatched an estimated 30,000 soldiers.

31 According to Tafla (1987, pp. 951-952), he was a Swiss adventurer, scholar, secret agent, consul, interpreter, and colonial official in the service of the Egyptian government in the second half of the 19th century. He was appointed governor of the eastern province of Sudan by the Khedive of Egypt, which he wanted to expand at the expense of Abyssinia regardless of his friendship with Dajazmach Kassa of Tigray (latter *Atse* Yohannes IV).

32 He was the son of Ras Michael of Wollo and Shewareged, the daughter of *Atse* Menelik II. He married Rumanna, the granddaughter of *Atse* Yohannes IV in May 1909 in an arrangement for consolidation of power when she was still seven years old.

33 *Lij* Iyasu would finally be killed in prison in 1936 by the order of the fleeing *Atse* Haile Selassie I following the Italian invasion of the kingdom. He was imprisoned in the cellar of the main building in Genete Leul Palace, in Addis Ababa University.

34 Slavery was the single biggest issue for European opposition to the membership of Abyssinia to the League of Nations. According to estimation by long-term imperial court physician, Dr. Paul Merab, around 1908 about 20,000 of the Addis Ababa population and three to four million Ethiopian populations, roughly 33 percent of the population in both cases was slaves (Delebo, 1983 Eth. C., p. 39). Though the slave trade was declared illegal starting 1922, the illicit practice continued because the feudal class could not let it go away as they had made slave trade and slavery part of their socio-economic life. In practice, however, the slave trade was not abolished in Ethiopia until the Italian occupation of 1936. In some parts of the country, slavery even survived the five years of Italian occupation and started to thrive after the return of the exiled *Atse* in 1942. Slavery was abolished in Ethiopia in its totality only after the deposition of the monarchy and institutionalization of socialist political ideology in the middle 1970s.

CHAPTER 7

EMPIRE OF ETHIOPIA (1930-1974)

The transition from the 'Empire of Abyssinia' to the 'Empire of Ethiopia' was jeeringly constitutional. On 16 July 1931, the 'Empire of Abyssinia' was constituted as the 'Empire of Ethiopia' in the first constitution of the empire. This was one step forward in the politics of the new Empire but the constitution was more of an act of consolidation and centralization of political power into the hands of the newly crowned *Atse*, Haile Selassie I, and legitimization of only his and his direct descents' right to the throne. It was also a formalizing document of the settler colonization of the non-Abyssinian NNPs under the red herring of "unification" and "modernization." The constitution was, thus, more of a means for the attainment of absolute power to the person of Haile Selassie I and to the hegemony of the Amhara-Tigre alliance than offering a genuine political solution for the oppression of the subjugated NNPs.

The constitution only worsened the situation of the subjugated NNPs. Though it declared unobtrusively: "All the natives of Ethiopia, subjects of the empire, form together the Ethiopian Empire," practically, it had become *modus operandi* that the natives were Abyssinians (*Habasha*). It only reinforced the status quo that they were portrayed as true Ethiopians and as first-class citizens. By virtue of being Christian and empire "builders," they were privileged to have cultural, moral, and economic supremacy over the 'subjects.' The subjects

were the colonized NNPs. The *Habasha* culture, language, religion, etc. became the imperial culture, language, religion, etc, and the state, the church, and the settler colonizers continued to expropriate the land and other resources of the "colony countries." The 'subjects' were continued to be portrayed as backward societies and second-class citizens. Their culture and language were banned or suppressed, manifestations of their identity denied, and they continued to be *gabbars*[1] on their lands. Also, they were forced to acknowledge the hegemony of the Abyssinian local rulers and clergy and learn their culture, language, traditions, and act accordingly. They have become the shadow of the new identity they were not in their ancestral country where they had been free and independent less than half a century ago.

Politically, the constitution was a symbol of constitutional absolutism. It abolished any form of regional autonomy and regional self-rule, including the traditional kingdoms,[2] and brought the empire under the rule of one absolute monarch. Highly centralized, mono language[3], monoculture, mono tradition, and mono government imperial system began to marshal the socio-political, economic, and foreign relations of the Empire. It institutionalized hierarchical and highly centralized administration. The new Amhara-Tigre-dominated state bureaucracy came in to swing with the interest and rule of one man, its creator *Atse* Haile Selassie I. The idea of democracy and republic continued to be described as an "illusion" and "a mistake" by the *Atse*. These marked the political transformation of the Empire of Abyssinia to the Empire of Ethiopia.

Transforming Abyssinia to Ethiopia, however, resulted in detrimental contradictions and controversies of national identity. Abyssinia fell short to encompass or fit the broader Ethiopia. On one hand, the process of molding the multinational empire into an Abyssinia-centred nation-state continued with the intensification of *Atse* Menelik II's modernization programs and *Atse* Haile Selassie's introduction of the imperial constitution, strictly centralized state bureaucracy, and absolutist unitary rule. On the other hand, the NNPs of the empire preferred to keep their historical identities and remain a multinational Ethiopia. This contradiction would lead to the imposition of bans of elements of national diversity. This led to the most pressing question of the era: 'Who are Ethiopians?' This question would animate all the political, social, cultural, and linguistic oppositions against imperial rule and the Habasha-centred Ethiopian nation-state building project.

The Adoption of the Name "Ethiopia"

The origin of the name Ethiopia has been debated by scholars for a long. Chaine (1909) explains that some say the source of the name is a combination

of two Greek terms *aithio* (I burn) and *pia* (face). Some say that the Greeks borrowed the word from the Egyptians *Ksh*, or *Kshi*, which, with a prefix, became Ekoshi with variants of *eshoosh, eshôsh, ethosh* in Coptic, which may have become the root word. Others say that the source is the Arabic word *atyab* (spices, perfume) according to Glaser or from an Arabo-Sabean word, *atyub,* which, according to Halévy, also means spices or perfumes, (Chaine, 1909). Semitic writers of 14th century BCE and 6th century BCE knew about the "land of burned face" and recorded about them; but they knew them as "Kashi," "Kasha," "Kaashshe," "Kaashshi," "Kasi," and perhaps as "Kush" (Budge, 1928, pp. 2-3). According to Budge (1928), the first five of these variants were recorded in the ancient clay tablets from the 14th century BCE while the sixth is recorded in the Bible in the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Isaiah was a prophet "who lived in Jerusalem in the latter half of the eighth century BC" and Ezekiel was a prophet who "lived in exile in Babylon during the period before and after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC" (Good News Bible, 2011, pp. 667, 802). The name "Kush," thus, entered the scripture during the eighth-sixth century BCE. This "Kush" is later translated to "Ethiopia" when the Hebrew Old Testament was translated to Greek. In Ethiopia, some recent unfounded Abyssinian traditions claim that it originated directly from Ethe'el, one of the alleged sons of Abraham who later became *Ethiop*, the alleged legendary founder of Ethiopia. In relation to this, some others, such as Jiksa (2016), though in a form of myth-making, claim that Ethiop was the name given to the Blue Nile region and it means 'yellow gold' which is pure for offering to Lord, the God of Abraham.

The popularity of the use of "*Ethiopia*" increased after the Hebrew term "Kush" was translated to "Ethiopia" in the Bible at the time the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew to Greek. By then, according to Herodotus (484–424 BCE), Ethiopia was the end of the world beyond Egypt. It meant to represent a vast region, not a single country or empire. It may be necessary to mention that during the time of Herodotus the world was believed to be a flat stretch of land floating on the vast ocean. Such belief, supported by religious scriptures, endured for so long until the enlightenment era when science finally proved it wrong by exposing little mysteries of the Universe. The ancient flat world was centered on the Mediterranean Sea. It was limited to northern Africa, southern mainland Europe, the Middle East, a very small portion of India and Asia. The vast part of Asia, the Americas, Australia, sub-Saharan Africa, Antarctica, and some territory beyond the English Channel and the Scandinavians were unknown. Nevertheless, when the Greek Bible has translated to Geez[4] (Ethiopic), the regional name started to be interpreted as the name of the then powerful kingdom found at one small corner of the vast geographical region represented by *Ethiopia*. This was done in spite of the fact

that in one of the victory stone inscriptions of the 3rd century CE Aksum, the king of Aksum proclaims himself king of many nations including that of Kush, later translated to *Ethiopia,* which lay west of the kingdom of Aksum in present-day Sudan. This is one clear sign that Aksum and Kush (*Ethiopia)* were two different nations, and the latter subdued the former. It also makes clear that Kush was not an accurate representation of "Ethiopia" because, before the translation, in antiquity, it meant to refer to the wider region, at least to all sub-Saharan region, not only to a small kingdom that the then city-state of Aksum could conqueror to the kingdom of Aksum itself, even at its zeniths.

However, the extent of the geographical representation of Ethiopia in history has also been debated. Though in antiquity, as mentioned in the works of Homer and Herodotus, *Ethiopia* referred to the people of Sudan, Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, and Western Asia and India divided into Eastern Ethiopians and Western Ethiopians, and in spite of Starbo's and Pliny's limit of its reference to the people who inhabited the valleys of the River Nile, ancient Ethiopia was without any geographical limits assigned to it by the Greek classical writers (Budge, 1928, p. 2). It was the land with no defined limit beyond Egypt towards the south and the west. Even so, based on the works of the Semitic writers, Budge (1928, p. 3) concluded that by the 7th century BCE *Ethiopia* represented the country to the south of the fourth cataract [on the River Nile]. Yet, Houston (1926) states: "The name Kush/Cush was given to four great areas, Media, Persia, Susiana, and Aria, or the whole territory between the Indus and Tigris in prehistoric times. In Africa, the Ethiopians, the Egyptians, the Libyans, the Canaanites, and Phoenicians were all [Cush] descendants of Ham. They were a black or dark-colored race and the pioneers of our civilization. In fact, "it applied to every people of a deep complexion" (Russell, 1985, p. 93). In the Bible, all the black nations are called Kush, and this Kush has been rendered as Ethiopia in Latin, Greek, and other translations (Johnson, 1985, p. 159). Johnson further explains that Arabia, even though it has not been possible to assign an exact limit, was called eastern Ethiopia to distinguish it from Africa, and the Persians called an Ethiopian Siah, Hindou, or Hindi while the eastern [Ethiopian]people, the Arabian, called them Ethiopia or Abyssinia (Johnson, 1985, p. 159).

The antique maps reflect the inconsistent geographical representation of Kush, Ethiopia, and Abyssinia. When humanity believed the Earth was flat, the land of Kush (Ethiopia) was referred to as the end of the Earth. However, after the world came to know in the middle of the second millennium CE that the Earth is not flat but globular; and consequently explored and circumnavigated it, the term Kush/*Ethiopia* started to be used by some geographers to rightfully refer to the landmass south of the Sahara. This Kush/Ethiopia was in no match with the later kingdom of Abyssinia. Before the 16th

century, the geographical limits of the Abyssinian kingdom were merely an imagination of its ambitious kings and ascribes of its church.

Only a few known maps of the Kingdom of Abyssinia were made before it had become an Empire. The first formal sketch map of Africa to emerge was probably the one made by the Portuguese. The one they made for Abyssinia arrived in the country together with the Portuguese embassy. The Portuguese mission led by Alvarez in 1520 showed the Abyssinian *Atse*, Lebne Dengel (Dawit II), perhaps for the first time, the generously exaggerated and ignorantly misrepresented territories of his country on a map that had been produced based on the legend of *Prester John* (see Figure 4). It was a creation of the imagination of European sketch mapmakers based on the legend of Prester John, and sketchy exploration that had been made in the coastal regions of the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa.

Figure 4: 15th-century map of the country of Prester John

The map was woefully inaccurate. It depicted the kingdom of Prester John that included modern Ethiopia, part of Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and some

part of Mozambique, and most part of DRC Congo. Amusingly, the map located some regions of modern northern Ethiopia below the Equator. Accordingly, some districts of modern Ethiopia, Shewa, Gojjam, Damot, Quara, for example, are located below the Equator. (Modern Ethiopia is several degrees north of the Equator.) Malindi of modern southern Kenya is almost on the same latitude as Shewa. 'Tigrai' is located west of 'Bagamidir,' and 'Syre' and 'Amasen' are bordered by Niger River, very close to West Africa. 'Balli' is located northeast of 'Fatigar,' far northeast of 'Xoa' and 'Amara', and east of 'Tigremahon'. Interestingly, it depicts "Olabi" (probably the ancient *Walaabuu,* the religo-political center of the Oromo before *Madda Wallabuu*), a region apparently on the same scale as Amara, Gojjam, Begemeder, or Fatagar, to the north of Amara and south of Angot. In addition, Gojjam and Damot are located very close to River Congo and the Atlantic Ocean then named on the map "Mare Aethiopicvm," Ethiopian Ocean (see Figure 4).

This gross inaccuracy and colossal exaggeration of the kingdom of Prester John (Kingdom of Abyssinia) has been exploited both advertently and inadvertently since its making. It had led some Europeans to the wild dream of accessing Abyssinia easily through rivers that flow to the western seaboard or to the southern tip of the African continent. Commenting on the exaggeration of the Abyssinian territory on the map shown to the king of Abyssinia, Jones, and Monroe (1935) state:

> On this map the dominions of Prester John occupied in the medieval manner a vast space . . . and it was hoped to open more convenient communications with the country via the Congo or 'some other river which flows to the Cape of Good Hope.' (p. 78)

The massive exaggeration of the domain of the Abyssinian kingdom, in association with the legend of the kingdom of Prester John, was not only before it was discovered but also after the visit of the Portuguese embassy. Jones and Monroe (1935) add, "[E]ven after the return of the embassy the ideas of the Portuguese on the extent of Abyssinia remained grossly exaggerated" (p. 78). The Portuguese map, which was not only imaginary in its conception but also a foolish exaggeration, would remain one of the bases for the Abyssinian kingdom to claim new territories by continuing to push its limits to the south, the west, and to the east during the second half of the 19th century. Even today, some people who would like to exploit the embarrassing error claim that the kingdom of Abyssinia was a vast empire before the 16th century, despite the fact that it was limited to present northern Ethiopia, Abyssinia Proper.

Figure 5: 1771 Map of Africa

Note. Reprinted from "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery in America" in slaverysite.com, by Neil A. Frankel. Retrieved from http://www.slaverysite.com/1771_map_of_africa.htm

Leaving the Portuguese ridiculous map aside, in the 17th century, geographers divided this landmass represented by the name Ethiopia, sub-Sahara Africa, into two sections. They called the lowland stretch of the region from eastern Sudan to the west coast Lower Ethiopia and the midland and highland region in south-central Africa region between the coastal regions Upper Ethiopia (see Figure 5). During this period, the Atlantic Ocean was also referred to as the Ethiopian Ocean. Abyssinia was a small enclave in the northeast of Upper Ethiopia. On some of the maps, it is oftentimes depicted as not belonging to either of the two Ethiopia. The vast territory represented by Ethiopia gradually shrank to Sudan for the former and to the south-central African region, on both sides of the equator, for the latter.

In the late 19th century, when the Empire of Abyssinia was in the making, geographically, "Ethiopia" was understood by geographers and ethnographers as the region in Africa east of the first half-length of the River Nile. Writing during the reign of *Atse* Yohannes IV (r. 1872-1889) of Abyssinia, Élisée Reclus (1892) summarized what the name "Ethiopia" meant then, including its recent association with the kingdom of Abyssinia:

> The name "Ethiopia," like so many other geographical terms, has changed in value during the lapse of centuries. Like Libya, it was once applied to the whole of the African continent; it even embraced a wider field, since it included India and all the southern lands of the Torrid zone occupied by the "men blackened by the sun," for such is the exact meaning of the term. . . . However, according as our knowledge of Africa increased, the term Ethiopia became less vague and was applied to a region of a smaller extent. Now it is restricted to the uplands forming the water-parting between the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the middle Nile. This is the region known to the Arabs by the name of Habesh, or Abyssinia, a term supposed to denote a mixed or mongrel population, hence reluctantly accepted by natives acquainted with Arabic. (p. 123)

This understanding leads to the suggestion that, in the end, "Ethiopia" was Abyssinia. The claim of *Atse* Menelik II to the vast region east of River Nile from Lake Victoria to Khartoum was motivated by such understanding and the misrepresentation of the kingdom of Prester John in the 15th-century Portuguese map.

The geography as may be, it is a matter of curiosity to ask, as people, who are the Ethiopians? Many historians have argued that Abyssinians are not true Ethiopians. For example, Budge argues that Ethiopians are Upper Nubians. He wrote:

> the Ethiopian whose manner and customs have been fully described by Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, Pliny, and others were not Abyssinians at all, but a native of the Upper Nubia and the inhabitants of the hot, moist land which extends from Southern Abyssinia to the Equator… (Budge, 1928, quoted in Melbaa, 1988, p. 35)

Similarly, an account by Block (1899) illustrates that the Semitic immigrants were not Ethiopians. He explains:

> The Semitic element, the immigration of which dates back to an unknown period, spread, particularly over the Tigré country. Its language is called the Giz. … The so-called Ethiopian race is also spread over the Tigré [province], but it predominates almost exclusively in Amhara [province] and the rest of the country. It presents striking points of resemblance to [Oromo] tribes in the southwest of Abyssinia (p. 44)

Russell (1985), substantiates the opinion that the people in Upper Nile and western side of the Red Sea "descended from a race of aboriginal Africans, who in the course of time mixed with the primitive inhabitants, and among the

Sabeæans and Hymyrites, with whom they established an early connexion" (p. 107). According to him, the ancient Ethiopians were Aboriginal Africans but the ancient Ethiopia, which was described as "Ethiopia above Egypt" as geography, was present-day Sudan (North Sudan) and northern Ethiopia (Abyssinia Proper).

This also leads to another question: Who should own the name Ethiopia?" Most historians agree that the rightful owner of the name Ethiopia as it has been used in the ancient historical records is modern-day Sudan. According to Houston (1924), "The whole of the space between the Nile and Abyssinia, and northward to Lower Egypt once constituted Ethiopia" (p. 41). Some of the Abyssinian historians also agree that ancient Ethiopia was Nubia. Takletsadiq Mekuria, for example unequivocally admits that ancient Ethiopia was Sudan (Nubia) and makes a distinction between modern Ethiopia and ancient Ethiopia in his historical works (Mekuria, 1965 Eth. C., pp. 37, 43).

However, because of the historical and religious importance of the name Ethiopia in the post-Hebraic Greek Bible and its consecutive translation to Ethiopic (Ge'ez), an attempt to find some seeming historical justification for its sole connection to the Kingdom of Abyssinia continued. In this endeavor, in an attempt to link the Abyssinian kingdom to ancient Egypt, Selassie (1972, pp. 21-23), for example, tried to link the land of Punt to Abyssinia. He did so by connecting references in the Egyptian hieroglyphics to Punt (the land of spices), to *To Netar* (the land of Gods), and to Khebsi (the divine land) which happened to be a reference to ancient lands to the south of Egypt with no specific geographic limits. Because the land of Puntites is also referred to as *Khebsi*, Selassie (1972, p. 25), having no doubt that the Abyssinian Kingdom was included within the region of Punt, automatically suggests that *Khbesi* may refer to *Habashat* because by the time of Ptolemaic Egypt the *Habasha*t tribe had migrated to the present territory of Abyssinian Ethiopia. *Habashat* is presumed to be the origin of the name Abyssinia.

With the gradual expansion and development of Christianity in Aksum and Abyssinia and its latter encirclement by Islam, the geographical reference of Ethiopia gradually gravitated towards Christian Abyssinia. In addition, many early Christian and medieval writers "made it [Ethiopia] to include Abyssinia, and the use of 'Abyssinia' and 'Ethiopia' as the synonymous terms" (Budge, 1928, p. 3) while the two were different. Budge (1928, p. 120) asserts, "The name Ethiopia was definitely given to Abyssinia by those who translated the Bible from Greek into 'Ethiopic'." The translators were Aksumite monks and monks who fled to Aksum from Byzantine.

As Christianity started to arrive in many sub-Saharan African nations, mainly starting from the 19th century, and the region started to be divided among colonial powers, the name Ethiopia came to lose its wider regional

appeal. Newer territorial names that later became to be known as the names of the respective countries after the independence of the nations from colonization, started to emerge. The common regional name could not become the name of a single country. As a result, regional names could not anymore remain popular. The name "Ethiopia" was not different.

Nevertheless, in the meantime, the Abyssinian church had understood the significance of the name because of its multiple mentions (over 40 times) in the Bible. Because it needed no historical justification but simply a belief or faith, the Abyssinian church faithfully adopted the name Ethiopia as refereeing only to the Christian Abyssinia. Early Abyssinian ascribes adopted the name of Ethiopia under the form ኢትዮጵያ (Budge, 1928, p. 3). Lapiso G Delebo (1982 Eth. C., pp. 233-234) provides details of the adaption of the name. He confirms that the name "Ethiopia" was adapted openly by Christian monks at Aksum Church to refer to the north-eastern African black nation and government that the neighboring Arabs used to call "Habasha" during the reign of *Atse* Amde Tsion (1314-1344) in the translation of *Kebra Nagast* from Arabic to Geez. The manuscript of *Kebra Nagast* was written first in Arabic and had no reference to "Ethiopia" but "Habasha."

Because of its religious prestige, the Abyssinian monks did not only adapt the name but also included it in their system of belief as if it specifically refers to the Abyssinian kingdom. J. M. Harden (1871-1931), Canon of St. Patrick's (Dublin), in his book *An Introduction to Ethiopic Christian Literature* (1926) states:

> The name Abyssinia comes to us from Arabic writers who speak of the land of Habash, a name that was given possibly by the Egyptians to some primitive African race. The name given to the country by the Christian inhabitants was Ethiopia. It has no direct connexion with the Ethiopia of classical writers, and with the Ethiopia of the Bible it is also unconnected, except that its adoption was no doubt due to a desire on the part of the Church of Abyssinia to trace back its own history to biblical times. (Harden, 1926, p. 1)

Such only religiously motivated claiming of the name "Ethiopia" for Abyssinia gradually passed on from Church to State. The kingdom could not underestimate its political implications. Some of the kings of the kingdom started to use the name as an alternative to Abyssinia, which was popularized by the writings of Catholic missionaries who converted one of the kings (*Atse* Susenyos, r. 1607-1632) of this historic country to Roman Catholicism in the early 17th century. There is no doubt that the Jesuits catholic proselytizers had the same religious motivation as the clergy of the Coptic Orthodox Church of the kingdom of Abyssinia to use the name "Ethiopia."

After several centuries of its rare use as an alternative to Abyssinia in the Abyssinian church and some of the writings of the Church, its political claim to represent the Kingdom of Abyssinia emerged during the reign of *Atse* Tewodros II. However, the old name Abyssinia was not dropped officially until the Imperial Constitution of 1931. The constitution not only legalized Abyssinian myth and legend of origin of the kingdom and its monarchs, and centralized the political power of the empire in one man's hand, but also promulgated the "new" name of "Ethiopia" instead of "Abyssinia." There was no political state of "Ethiopia" before the 1931 constitution; but Kush, Kingdom of Aksum, Kingdom of Abyssinia, and Empire of Abyssinia. The subsequent constitutions of 1955, 1987, and 1994 promulgated the name "Ethiopia" as a formal political name of the Empire of Abyssinia, the People's Republic of Ethiopia, and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, respectively.

This bold move of claiming the name "Ethiopia" for themselves by the Christian monks of Aksum many centuries ago and the Abyssinian kings since *Atse* Tewodros II in the mid-19th century did not only help the Abyssinian leaders to define all the Abyssinians and non-Abyssinians as Ethiopians in the 20th century. It also helped them to portray the conglomeration of multiple NNPs that were forcefully put together by colonialist Abyssinians into the Abyssinian Empire-cum-Empire of Ethiopia-cum-Ethiopia as one nation: a "unified" ancient nation. A colonial empire, carved from East Africa, almost instantly became an ancient kingdom. As a result, it audaciously claimed thousands of years of history. The claim was for two purposes: first, to fortress itself against the colonial expansion of European powers in the region who were eager to annex Abyssinia, second, to legitimize the colonization of formerly independent kingdoms, states, and peoples in the vast territory south and southwest of the kingdom.

The adoption of the name "Ethiopia" brought massive religious and political success that neither the Christian monks nor the Christian kings had ever imagined. Domestically, the adopted name continued to play a significant role both in the political and religious lives of most of the Ethiopian societies. In the international political arena, the *Abyssinia* of the League of Nations before World War II became *Ethiopia* of the United Nations. Winning the regional name for itself alone, Abyssinia started to be known officially as Ethiopia in the era of the UN. Playing the ancient and medieval names very well waxing it with myth and legends, the Empire that was born through conquest and annexations of dozens of kingdoms, states, sultanates, and the independent indigenous government only during the last decade of the 19th century has positioned itself comfortably as one of the ancient countries in the world among the community of nations.

This has resulted in confusing what Ethiopia represented in history and what it stands for now. All recorded history of the Kingdom of Abyssinia, Kingdom of Aksum, and the Zagwean Dynasty, together with the legendary kingdom of Makeda (Sheba) have been overnight "unified" under the name Ethiopia in the Abyssinian project of claiming the name for itself. "Ethiopia" replaced "Abyssinia" and extended to Aksumite and pre-Aksumite kingdoms while its former extended representation of at least almost all sub-Saharan Africa including Abyssinia with the exception of south most regions of the continent is now reduced to the geography of the Abyssinian Empire as Menelik II made it. As a result, historical confusion has emerged with regards to what region or political history Ethiopia has historically represented and who the true Ethiopians have been. The persistent presentation of Ethiopia of the early 20th century as ancient Ethiopia by some Ethiopian and foreign historians alike with an extended claim of the so-called "uninterrupted" history of 3000 years of the Semitic Kingdom in a Cushitic region of Horn of Africa has made the confusion worse. The religious importance of the name to Abyssinian Church has even exalted the claim to an ecclesiastic level, complementary to the faith. This is partly because the legend of the origin of the kingdom and its kings have already been canonized by the Church who have been benefiting the most since the emergence of the written record of the legend in *Kebra Nagast*. Finally, yet importantly, because the Amhara and the Tigre have built the legend into their religious, social, and political identities in the last eight centuries, it has been difficult for them to divorce themselves from the failed legend. This has been evident from do-or-die attempts of some Abyssinian elites to fight back to once again try to convince or further confuse their nation, and if they could, the rest of the NNPs of the Ethiopian Federation on what Ethiopia was, is and will be and what it has been representing throughout history since the name Ethiopia came to existence.

The new Abyssinian "Ethiopia," inconsistently and inaccurately, claimed the history of ancient "Ethiopia." It did so in an attempt to glorify the Abyssinian Kingdom, to establish its perpetual dominance in the region, and to promote Christianity and Abyssinian identity. Its elites have attempted to build Abyssinian supremacy by building its political and religious legitimacy based on the conjured legend connecting the monarchs of the kingdom to the ancient Kingdom of Israel. They have employed the strategy of extending the associated story of "Queen of the South" in the Holy Bible.

Because of the adaption of the name the "Ethiopia," specifically for "Empire of Abyssinia" and the subsequent automatic replacement of "Abyssinia" with "Ethiopia" in Abyssinian records and historiography, some historians and commoners (Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian alike) have overlooked the historical transformation of the name. The transformation has

resulted in a consequent change in geographical and timeline designation of the territories and history the ancient name used to represent. Ancient Ethiopia (Kush), which used to designate a much wider region, has now been narrowed to the dominion of modern Ethiopia. This has added more discontentment to the already brewing confusion and historical misrepresentation by the name "Ethiopia." This failed attempt to expropriate the regional name to only a constituent part of it has never been of less important or less useful for few Abyssinian political elites to continue confusing readers of history as to what the Kingdom of Abyssinia was and Ethiopia is so long as it appears to them that doing so is the only way to keep the failed legendary history and identity alive.

Beyond troubled past history, contested claims, and exclusivist and restrictive self-identification of the Abyssinian Christian Kingdom with it, geographically, the name Ethiopia today legally and politically represents the territory of the Ethiopian Federation. Since the promulgation of the 1931 imperial constitution of the Empire of Ethiopia (Ethiopia) and since the formation of the UN (globally), the name "Ethiopia" has become the official constitutional name of the present Ethiopian Federation. Almost all the NNPs of the federation enjoy this historical name as the official name of their federation notwithstanding the fact that historically it was the name of a wider region in the continent of Africa and beyond. Few NNPs who have some dissatisfaction in being referred to as Ethiopians actually have no dissatisfaction with the historical name but with those who tried to monopolize it to their ethnocentric narrow political and religious interests and treated other Ethiopians as a second class during the recent colonial history of the Empire of Ethiopia. No one nation ever had a monopoly over the name "Ethiopia" and its history nor was "Ethiopia" synonymous with the Kingdom of Abyssinia that was only part of it nor has the Empire of Ethiopia (the present Ethiopian Federation) encompassed all of ancient Ethiopia. It has only been a significant part of it.

At the same time, ancient Ethiopian citizenship has not been limited to citizens of Abyssinia Proper: all the nations, nationalities, and peoples of the federation, including the Abyssinians, were and are equally Ethiopians. Indeed, there are many ancient Ethiopians outside of the present domain of modern Ethiopia. All the Kushite nations are ancient Ethiopians. They all share every history by the name of ancient Ethiopia as they have belonged to the Horn of Africa region that this great name has represented since time immemorial regardless of the name and the form of government they have had at different times in their respective recent histories.

Empire of Ethiopia and *Atse* Haile Selassie I

Resistance and rebellion to the absolutist rule of *Atse* Haile Selassie began when he was still the regent of the inept *Etege* Zewditu. Several subjugated nations continued to resist the Abyssinian rule and revolted against the pervasive injustice, exploitations, and misappropriation of land and property by the state-sponsored settler colonizers. Some nations rebelled against the rule of the *Atse*. The Oromo were among those nations who resisted imperial rule. Notables Oromo rebellions were of the Azebo-Raya Oromo during 1928-30 and of the Bale Oromo during 1962-1970. In addition, there was a rebellion in West Oromia. The western Oromo organized themselves into Oromo confederacies and called for the establishment of an independent Western Oromo Confederacy following the Italian invasion of 1936. They appealed for independence and protectorate of the League of Nations by a letter signed by thirty-three brave Oromo chiefs (Mole, 2014, p. 30). The support from Colonel Brocklehurst, a British officer who favored the establishment of a separate Oromo State affiliated to the United Kingdom, for the last was withdrawn following the complaint of the exiled *Atse* Haile Selassie I to the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill (Pankhurst, 1978, p. 122).

Some nations in the present SNNP were also revolting against imperial rule particularly during a few years before the Italian aggression. *Atse* Haile Selassie I tried to suppress the revolt by the deployment of the imperial army. The Italian occupation started in October 1935. This forced the imperial army to withdraw from the south and march for national defense. There were civil wars in the SNNP during the early years of the Italian occupation that followed the withdrawal of the Ethiopian army from the south (Braukæmper, 2012, p. 419). By the time Italy occupied Addis Ababa in 1936, Haile Selassie I went to exile to Europe. While he was in exile, World War II broke out in 1939.

During the early years of World War II, the intervention of Great Britain restored Atse Haile Selassie II to his imperial throne in Addis Ababa under certain arrangements. In 1940, after entering World War II, the Italian advanced from southern Abyssinia to British Somalia. This led to the Anglo-Ethiopian counter-offensive on Italian forces in Ethiopia in 1941. Haile Selassie I, as head of the Ethiopian government in exile, had joined the Allied Forces (Ajayi, 2005, p. 612). Hence, Ethiopia had officially become a member of the Allied Forces. The joint offensive of the British Army and Ethiopian Patriots resulted in the defeat of the Italian forces. This helped Haile Selassie I to return to Ethiopia. The British, in addition to maintaining a protectorate over Ethiopia during the war, "administered the Ogaden for eight years until it transferred part of the Ogaden (Jijjiga area) to Ethiopia for the first time.

Other parts of Ogaden were transferred to Ethiopia in 1954 and 1956" (Mahdi, 2006, p. 77).

The restored government of *Atse* Haile Selassie I, however, faced some challenges in the subsequent years in the south of the country. The confrontation between the Italian forces on one side and the British Army and Ethiopian Patriots on the other side created an administrative vacuum in south-central Ethiopia leading to an inter-ethnic conflict that would last until 1943. In addition, some of the new policies of the restored government met resistance in the south. In 1942, the Imperial government introduced a tax reform that revoked the legal basis of the *Gabbar system*. But the award of land in the south to the new social group called *Arbegna* (patriots) starting in 1944 made the life of the southern people as difficult as before the abolition of the Gabbar system. In addition, the next decade saw the massive conversion of the southern peoples, particularly the Arsi and the Hadiyya, to Islam mainly in protest against the aggressive missionary campaign of the Abyssinian Orthodox Church. Despite the failure, the Abyssinian Church, as a complementary part of the monarchy, continued the mission that was followed by a massive settlement of Christian peasants from north Ethiopia on the state-owned land in Arsi and Bale. The *Atse,* with the full support of the allied countries, particularly Great Britain, USA, and France, managed to pacify resistance and show signs of reconstruction of the country on the impressive economic, infrastructural, and commercial foundations built by the occupying Italy in five years.

To hold the Empire together by force, *Atse* Haile Selassie I chose the tools of absolute centralization of power and high bureaucratization of state services. Moreover, during his long years of power that span from 1917 to 1974, the *Atse* "built the largest army in black Africa with material support from the United States" (Vaughan & Tronvoll, 2003, p. 82). The military was used in suppressing decisively ethnic uprisings and regional rebellions in many parts of the Empire, including in Rayya and Azebo (Tigray), Ogaden, Sidama, Bale, Gojjam, and Eritrea.

Nonetheless, *Atse* Haile Selassie I (1892-1975) was credited for establishing the modern bureaucracy of his government. He had installed a network of loyal bureaucracy from top to bottom. The functions of the government, as a result, became modernized. This gave an impression to the outside world that the Imperial rule was modernizing the Empire and signs of progress were emerging. On the contrary, the modern bureaucracy protected the oppressive system that the *Atse* installed for the benefit of his cronies, supporters, and old noble families. The political and economic life of ordinary people hardly improved. The lately introduced political economy of transition from feudalism to capitalism had no place for the ordinary citizen. The relatively

long political stability that was achieved under the *Atse* also helped the feudal lords and the aristocratic families to enjoy the labor of the *Gabbars* and serfs peacefully for long.

Atse Haile Selassie I outmaneuvered his people and the West during his long rule that made him appear invincible until the emergence of ESM in the mid-1960s. He ruled the new empire handed to him well-formed by *Atse* Menelik II first as a regent and later as *Atse* for such a long time (1916-1974) that two generations of the people of the empire were borne into his era. The State Church declared him the "guardian of the faith" and revered him so much so as a distant cousin of Jesus Christ. Because the church he heads and the faithful, according to the legendary origin of the monarch, believed he descended from King David through King Solomon. In addition, through his extensive travels and smart diplomatic maneuvers and endeavors, he managed to present both stateman and saintly images of himself to the international community. The deception was channeled particularly to the people of Africa and African origin in the West who had little means to witness the oppressions of NNPs and the suffering of the Ethiopian peasant under the cruel yoke of the *nafxanyaa* political system he leads. Some European kingdoms (United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Netherlands, and Belgium) sought to have a good self-fulfilling relationship with the monarchy and ignored the oppression of the people of Ethiopia that came to their attention through their missions in the country or through the reports of the League of Nations and the UN. Some of them wanted to export their Capitalist economic system to help themselves channel the economic resources and advantages of the country for themselves than any other thing. The imperial political mechanism that was based on the conquest of many nations and their oppression by one dominant nation and culture over many decades had built a strong grip over the disadvantaged NNPs, who grew poorer and weaker, appeared to be indestructible. The few rebellions that have emerged were soon crushed brutally with the army and the security forces trained and equipped mainly by the USA. As a result, political change was less anticipated so long as the *Atse* was alive until the ESM started to raise questions that spasmed the spine of the monarchy in the 1960s.

However, the precipitate politics gained a forceful momentum after the breakout of civil unrest led by teachers, students, workers, and taxi drivers in January 1974 that was followed a little later by mutinies in the imperial armed forces (Abraham, 1994). Because no political party was allowed to be organized in the country, the military that had the imperial organization and the revolting section of the national army and security forces finally gained prominence over the underground political movements both in the country and abroad. The military, the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), finally,

easily, and comfortably deposed the aged *Atse*, declared the abolition of the monarchy, announced the formation of provisional military administration during the transition. The council mounted itself on the driver's seat of the people's revolution and made itself the vanguard of the revolution.

By the time of *Atse* Haile Selassie I's deposition, the oppression of the ordinary citizens had reached its breams and already started to spill over. In the 1974 Ethiopian peoples' revolution, the revolutionary flood inundated and washed away not only the government of the *Atse* but also the legendary monarchy that had fooled the people for too long. The fall of the monarchy ignited the question of political legitimacy in the empire state.

Notes to Chapter 7

1 Gabbar is an Amharic word with the literal meaning of "one who has totally submitted" in a context where the powerless society or family succumbs to the mercy of the powerful society or family following the defeat of the former. In the context of the Abyssinian Gabbar system, the Abyssinians who conquered the non-Abyssinians imposed a socio-economic system where the latter is reduced to a servant of the former in return for the privilege to live on the land that was taken away from the latter.

2 During the reign of *Atse* Menelik II semi-autonomous kingdoms existed in the empire. Provisional kings under *Atse* Menelik II ruled the kingdoms of Jimma, Gojam, Wollo, Afar, Benishangul, and Leqa Naqamte and Leqa Qellem. The political relationship between the kings and the *Atse* was cooperative with an exclusively defined power of both kings on the people in those jurisdictions. The relationship between the kingdom of the Leqas under Gebre Igziabiher Moroda and *Atse* Menelik II, as analyzed by Triulzi (2002, pp. 67-68), for example, was a dynamic relationship which was the result of a mutual process of "continuous process of adjustment to and with other parties requests" and change at the provincial kingdoms affected the central imperial rule in similar was that the changes at the center affected the provincial kingdom. The relationship between other provincial kingdoms and the center could not be different. These relationships could be viewed as predecessors to the distinctive relationships between local government and the central government found in some modern federations that save the lack of democratic principles and the right of the local people for self-rule. Thus, it is reasonable to say that there existed some elements of the modern relationship between federal and state governments had existed between the regional kingdoms and the central imperial rule during the era of Imperial Abyssinia under *Atse* Menelik II.

3 The British consul to southern Abyssinia in 1919s, Arnold W. Hodson, in his book *Seven Years in Southern Abyssinia* published in 1927 reported being aware of the existence of seventy separate languages and about two hundred different dialects in Abyssinia (Hodson, 1927, p. 18). Yet, all were officially banned from public use by the imperial policy of building Amharic speaking monolingual empire. If choosing one *lingua franca* were necessary, the most fitting language would be *Afaan Oromo*, not Amharic. This is because, before the banning of the Oromo language (*Afaan Oromo*) from public use by the constitution of *Atse* Haile Selassie I, Hodson (1927) asserts, "Practically all Abyssinians speak [Afaan Oromoo], and they use it when talking to the natives" (p. 18). He further finds out that Amharic is more difficult to learn than *Afaan Oromo* is. He recommends to foreign travelers to learn Oromo because it was the language spoken by "all Abyssinian." He also makes his curious observation that "in spite of so many of the great Abyssinian officers being pure Oromo and nearly every Abyssinian

knows Oromo as well as Amharic, they refrain from speaking Oromo in public for a reason that cannot be any other than false pride" (Hodson, 1927, p. 19)

4 It is the oldest literary language in Abyssinia. It is no more language of conversation. Only some Abyssinian Orthodox Church religious elites can read and write in Geez. Geez, the language was well preserved by the pastoral Habab people (in Sudan and in the northwest of Abyssinia) at the end of the 19th century (Reclus, 1892 p. 152).

CHAPTER 8

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA (1974-1991)

The few years that followed the abolition of the monarchy were years of state and civilian terrorism in Ethiopia. The PMAC executed dozens of nobility and officials of the deposed monarchy. The deposed *Atse* Haile Selassie I was also killed under indeterminate circumstances. The mass arrest of reactionaries followed. Then the Council encountered an internal power struggle and as a result, assassinated some of its prominent members. The assassinations of General *Aman Michael Andom* in November 1974 and General *Tafari Bante*[1] in February 1977 were the results of internal conflict and the desire of Colonel *Mengistu Hailemariam* to ascend and consolidate the state power. The reactionary's "white terror" that targeted the new regime and its officials was answered heavy-handedly by the regime's "red terror." PMAC, also known as Derg, aimed for the elimination of the reactionaries and opposition. The clash between the two resulted in, according to some conservative estimates, the death of over 100, 000 people, and perhaps several hundred thousand refugees (Abraham, 1994). Pre-occupied with its internal struggle, the "white terror" and the counter "red terror" and the war with Somali in 1977-78, the military government was not able to implement the necessary political, economic, social, and cultural reforms to the satisfaction of the peoples of Ethiopia.

One of the flagships changes that PAMC introduced was the land reform, which it soon weaponized. It was the follow up from the ESM "Land to the Tiller!", the iconic slogan during their protests against imperial rule. The reform granted peasants the rightful users of the land they work. It also soon became the means of oppression for the military government, serving as its means of control of the peasant in whose name it had taken the pretense of the leadership of the revolution. Forced participation in cooperatives and peasant association, the imposition of a quota system for the national grain reserve and

cereal market, heavy taxation of the land, systemic control of the market, production, supply, and prices, and other inherent political elements of socialism left the peasant to pervasive exploitation by the state. Some argue that failure to accompany such reform that should have effectively empowered the peasants left the door open for its abuse; and "its abuse turned in to a more rapacious system of exploitation of the resources and labor of the peasants, the supposed beneficiaries of the reform" (Lata, 1999, p. 3).

The military government not only suffered from a lack of legitimacy to "own" the people's revolution but also failed to manage the national question[2] of the NNPs of Ethiopia. Perhaps more than the failure to reform the economy, the Amhara culture, and language dominated society and the political landscape where its leader simply replaced the face of the *Atse*, the military government failed to understand the fundamental political needs of the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia and their national question for self-determination. Though Derg theoretically accepted the ideology of national self-determination, it failed to implement it (Teshome, 2009, p. 61). The NNPs of Ethiopia, to a varying degree and organization, started to voice their national questions louder than the socialist rhetoric of the military government and demand their rights to self-determination organizing themselves into armed resistance.

Economically, PMAC (Derg) stopped the investment in the country in its truck. The investment flow from abroad had improved because of the aristocratic-centered capitalism of the imperial regime. Aristocrats and their foreign affiliates were active in selective sectors in the empire. As soon as the Derg declared "scientific socialism" as its socio-political ideology and aligned itself with the eastern bloc of the Cold War, investors were alarmed of what was coming and investment flow into the county from the West stopped. This was followed by yet another shocking move by the regime. Its nationalization of private properties of citizens and civic institutions. It proclaimed that excess urban land and houses are nationalized. It became illegal to own more than one house and a determined amount of land in urban areas. Shortly, the private ownership of land was annulled, and the land became state property. In the process, farms, industries, manufacturing plants, share-holding companies that were established by private investors, or in partnership with the imperial state were nationalized. Yet, the regime had no financing capability of its own or other sources of investment. These subsequent moves by the new regime not only slowed the growth but also inaugurated the further impoverishment of the country and its peoples.

Added to this was the civil war. The Derg usurped the people's revolution that had the ambition of bringing justice, equality, and abolition any form of oppression and discrimination became oppressors in a matter of months.

Some of the nations of the empire who had hoped for the better or already started the liberation struggle opted for national self-determination. Whereas Derg was not interested in intertrain the quest for national self-determination in any form. It continued to hold the disgruntled nations, nationalities, and peoples together by force and continued the Abyssinian-centre nation-state building project of the Imperial Era. This aggravated the Eritrean quest for liberation from its annulled confederal arrangement with Ethiopia. The Oromo also opted for liberation. The same sentiment also developed among the Tigray and the Sidama nations. Other nations also opted for national self-rule. Their respective liberation fronts engaged the regime with arms. Their guerrilla warfare became the longest civil war in the history of the country. The liberation fronts and the Derg government were engaged in devastating civil war for about seventeen years. Derg drafted sons and daughters of the poor to the national army by force, hunting them like games. Parents who had the money and the connection could be able to pay surety for their children to evade being drafted. By the end of May 1991, 1,050,000 national army members were killed or disappeared, and the government had expended an estimated 17.24 billion USD (Abraham, 1994, p. 10). The total number of deaths and the financial costs of the liberation fronts remained unknown.

The public administration and social policy of the socialist military government also became worse. Civilian governors and administrators were replaced by military officers, by members of Derg. Military officers were in control of the civil administration, justice system, and law enforcement. Not only lack of professionalism but also lack of national vision and public policy was prevalent among these military officials. They were authoritarian and morally corrupt. Their trade was the formation of unions and mass national organizations. Tens of thousands of cooperative unions were formed. Many of them existed in a given village. Yet few of them were economically effective. National organizations of farmers, the youth, and the women were formed, and their chapters extended to the lowest level of the administration. Derg used them primarily for citizen-control. The last failed project of the Derg was its villagization program. The idea was to collect remote dispersed households at an accessible nearest place in a new village so that they could access basic development infrastructure. Its implementation was, however, a disaster. People were forced to dismantle their huts and carry the material to the selected wild location where there was infrastructure and build it there on a small random plot of land to a given uniform size and shape hoping that the government could build basic infrastructure around them. This was done with little or no consultation with the target communities nor there was a proper plan and secured funding. People were forced to move to leave their livelihoods, privileges, and social classes behind to the certain future that would

make them dependent on the government. This resulted in great anxiety among the traditional people who valued their natural environment (the grooves, the backyard farm, the ceremonial hills, thanksgiving places, natural springs) and the privacy of their traditional homes. After causing lots of pain and anxiety and loss of economic resources, the villagization program was abandoned. It has remained one of the social policy blunders of the socialist regime.

Politically, the notable progress of the Derg was its attempt to transform itself into a civilian party, ratification of the 1987 Constitution, and admission that socialism as a national policy was a failure. Though it took Derg ten years to form a civilian party, finally it formed the Workers Party of Ethiopia in 1984. WPE was the product of the Ethiopian Commission for Organization of Party for Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE), which was established on 18 December 1979 and was in effect at work until the formation of WPE. WPE was a single socialist national party akin to the Chinese communist party. After ruling for over a dozen years by decree by abolishing the Imperial Constitution, Derg was willing to make a new constitution for the country through a participatory and democratic process. A representative constitution commission was set up and the commission drafted the constitution. The public was allowed to debate on the daraf constitution, and a free and fair referendum was held to ratify the constitution. The constitution established the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in 1987. A year later, Mengistu Hailemariam, the military dictator who was elected by the new parliament President of the new republic, tried to strike a reconciliatory tone hinting at the readiness of the government for no military solution to the civil war in the country and the drift from socialism. Two years later, in 1990, the socialist government admitted that socialism would not work in Ethiopia and inaugurated a new economic policy known as a "mixed economy".

Overall, the country skidded from bad to worse during the seventeen years of military rule. The people may be free from imperial rule and national and/or class oppression, but state oppression continued. The socialist economy did not work well. The people grew poorer throughout the country. There was no sustained peace in the country. The civil war was raging. Its destruction of life and property was immense. Besides, frequent droughts starved millions of people particularly in the north part of the country. The collapse of the socialist blocks of countries, particularly that of the USSR was very alarming to the socialist government. In the meantime, the rebel liberation forces continued to gain the upper hand in many battles because of low morale in the national army and increasing defections of generals. By the time the rebel groups took control of the capital in May 1991, the national economy was crushed, and the people were grossly impoverished.

Note to Chapter 8

1 The actual name of his father was Banti an Oromo name meaning "the top of the central pillar." However, as it was common during his time to have Amharic's first name and changing the Oromo parental names into Amharic (particularly in central Ethiopia) he changed his father's name to Bante, an Amharic name meaning "with you." After the conquest of the Oromo by *Atse* Menelik II and consequent banning of Oromo language and culture from public use, the Oromo were forced to assimilate to the Abyssinian culture and language, including the naming of babies. During Haile Selassie's regime, it was a requirement for an Oromo or a person of non-Abyssinian origin, in general, to change his/her name to Amharic or baptismal name to be employed in the public services. Abyssinia bureaucrats, who were predominantly Amhara, were pleased to hear an Oromo name or another name not one of theirs as their co-worker. The simple fact that they cannot say the name properly was reason enough for the Oromo to change his/her name. The same was true, and perhaps stricter, to be recruited into the national army. Having a name that sounds Amharic or copied from the names found in the Christian or Muslim scripture has been accepted and appreciated by the ruling elites from *Atse* Menelik II to Mengistu Hailemariam. Millions of people in Ethiopia today have such first and family names and are presumed to be Amharans from outset, while they are in reality belonged to the many non-Abyssinian nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia. This is clear and quite common: some people in Ethiopia, who have an Amharic name, do not even know the meaning of their names. Nor do their parents who gave it to them know its meaning. It has also been perceived incorrectly in Ethiopia that someone who has an Amharic name is an Amhara, a Christian, or an Abyssinian. As a result, in present-day Ethiopia, it is only after inquiring some names up to the name of a grandfather or to the great grandfather of the person that the true national (ethnic) identity of the person would be revealed. After 1991 however, many nations took pride in their identity and refused to use names none other than that of their origin and culture. The exceptions are religious influences where parents pick names for their children from among the common names in the Bible or Kur'an.

2 In Amharic language, it was known commonly as **የብሄረ ጥያቄ** (literally, the "question of the nation") in the early stage of the ESM. Some argue that it meant the "question of ethnicity" while others say that it meant "question of nationalities." It is however clear that there was an understanding of the existence of multiple nations or nationalities or both.

CHAPTER 9

ETHIOPIAN FEDERATION (1991-)

The formation of the Ethiopian Federation began virtually at the National Peace and Reconciliation Conference held in Addis Ababa from 1-5 July 1991 following the fall of the Government on 28 May. The conference ratified the Transitional Charter (TC) that laid the foundation for the formation of the federation and formed the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) for its effective formation. The TGE was, in effect, the complete process of the formality of the formation of the federation. I have also dealt with the Ethiopian Federation in another book, *The Ethiopian Federation: Formation, Features, and Challenges*. Readers are requested kindly to refer to the book for details. Here I have reproduced a summary of the chapter that deals with the formation of the federation.

> The fall of the socialist government in May 1991 was followed by the formation of the TGE in July 1991. On the eve of the fall of the central government in the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the major armed fronts had a negotiation conference in London. The participants were the Ethiopian government and EPRDF, EPLF, and OLF. The USA and the Foreign Office of the UK were behind the organization of the conference. The USA had a personal stake in the rebel groups and has since recently supported both EPRDF and EPLF. The socialist government was standing on its nails: it only hoped to have a ceasefire, which could lead to a power-sharing agreement with the rebels. This was not accepted by the rebels who knew that soon the central government will collapse. The fact that the

President, Mengistu Halie-Mariam had just fled the country and the capital was about to fall made the event chaotic. A great danger was looming in Addis Ababa as the government was failing increasingly to maintain peace and order and both civilian and army officials were defecting. Amid this, the USA approving of the EPRDF to take state power in Addis Ababa as a provisional government with the underlying consensus that it would form immediately an inclusive transitional government.

Accordingly, the TGE was formed by the Transitional Charter that was approved at the end of the Peace and Reconciliation Conference held in Addis Ababa from 1-5 July 1991. This conference determined the future of Ethiopia, excluding Eritrea, which was waiting to verify its independence formally via a referendum. Among others, it rejected the legendary ancient and unitary nation-state Ethiopia and tacitly declared it is a multinational modern empire state established at the end of the 19th century. Political forces operating in or outside of the country were represented at the conference. However, the TPLF/EPRDF excluded deliberately some well-established parties, such as EPRP and WPE from the conference. The Charter, which was more of a political pact among the nationalist organizations and heavily influenced by political ideologies of TPLF/EPRDF and OLF, established a very moderate representative but EPRDF dominated CoR, the parliament of the TGE. The eighty-seven-member CoR elected Meles Zenawi from TPLF/EPRDF its chairperson, Fekadu Gedamu (Guragie) vice-chairperson, and Tesfaye Hadisu (Kembata) secretary respectively. Tamirat Layne (Amhara) was appointed Prime Minister, a very nominal position. The CoR was simply a free ride for TPLF's Meles.

During the TGE, TPLF/EPRDF developed a despotic tendency. The transitional period in Ethiopia lasted from July 1991 to August 1995. During this four-year period, the character of TPLF/EPRDF changed dramatically. It became more authoritarian defying its promises, donors, and main political backers. It started to mold the TGE all to its measure. It made use of two key strategies to widen its political acceptance throughout the country: controlling the population base in the

core states where it has representation through the coalition, EPRDF and ensuring further dominance in the periphery states where it has no representation through the formation of satellite parties that must ally with it. Both strategies helped EPRDF to dominate in the political arena. As soon as it ensured its dominance, EPRDF employed imprudent political tactics to purge political opponents from the TGE. It curbed its political promise for fair participation and development of participatory democracy, intimidated opposition including with threat of arms, shipped some economic resources to the north (to Tigray), forced most of the oppositions out of the 1992 election and out of the TGE, formed a for-profit business in the name of members of EPRDF, against the laws, mostly out of public resources but owned, at least in part, by its political elites, and outplayed donors who would have kept it in the line by frustrating and dishonoring them.

The change of character of EPRDF attracted more and more opposition during the TGE. Fundamentally, there were two types of opposition: process opposition and program opposition. The former opposed the political program of EPRDF because of the process that it followed, including the federalization process that was undergoing. The latter group opposed the content (federalization) itself. In general, the former opted for non-ethnically based federalism while the latter opted for maintenance of a unitary nation-state. From both groups, a strong coalition of opposition emerged. The first group was however stronger. These coalitions tried to organize conferences to reach a resolution against EPRDF and the EPRDF dominated TGE. This angered EPRDF and brought unwelcomed consequences. EPRDF was able to purge most of the participants of both the Paris and the Addis Ababa opposition conferences out of the CoR and hence out of the TGE.

In the meantime, EPRDF intensified the politics of ethnicity in the country. This was based on turned and twisted Marxist-Leninist interpretations of the national questions of nationalities. It employed artful dramatization of Ethiopian national, cultural, and linguistic diversity. This led easily to the recognition of over

> sixty NNPs in Ethiopia before the approval of the new Constitution.
>
> The consequence of this recognition of diversity would show in the Constitution that recognizes all NNPs in Ethiopia as equal and sovereign and affirms constitutionally the tacit total rejection of the legendary unitary Ethiopia by the Transitional Charter. The recognition also implied the sovereign NNPs could declare their independence as they wish, i.e., could secede unconditionally. These recognitions, however, raised the challenge of keeping the territorial integrity of Ethiopia. The dominant TPLF, however, continued the mostly ethno-linguistically based federalization process relying on the humble view of the benefits of upholding Ethiopian multinational union voluntarily. By the end of the TGE, Ethiopia had been restructured into nine national regional states and two city governments under the new Constitution that established the FDRE. By the end of the transitional period, the TPLF/EPRDF dominated TGE had changed the social and political fabric of the Ethiopian peoples and the soul of the Ethiopian state. (Demmeksa, 2018b, pp. 104-106).

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has constituted these changes. The constitution set up the Ethiopian Federation (1995-) where all the NNPs of Ethiopia are sovereign and equal and the right to national self-determination of NNPs, up to secession, is granted constitutionally.

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